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# VideoGames & Computer Entertainment®

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May 1991

HERE COME THE...

## BATTLETOADS

**MAPS  
AND TIPS:**

Sega's  
Castle of Illusion  
Starring Mickey  
Mouse, Part I



Konami's  
Castlevania III  
Part II



05

COMPUTER GAME PREVIEWS  
FOR THE LONG, HOT  
SUMMER

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Frogs...



Terrifically Tantalizing  
Toads...



and Precious  
Princesses  
in Peril!



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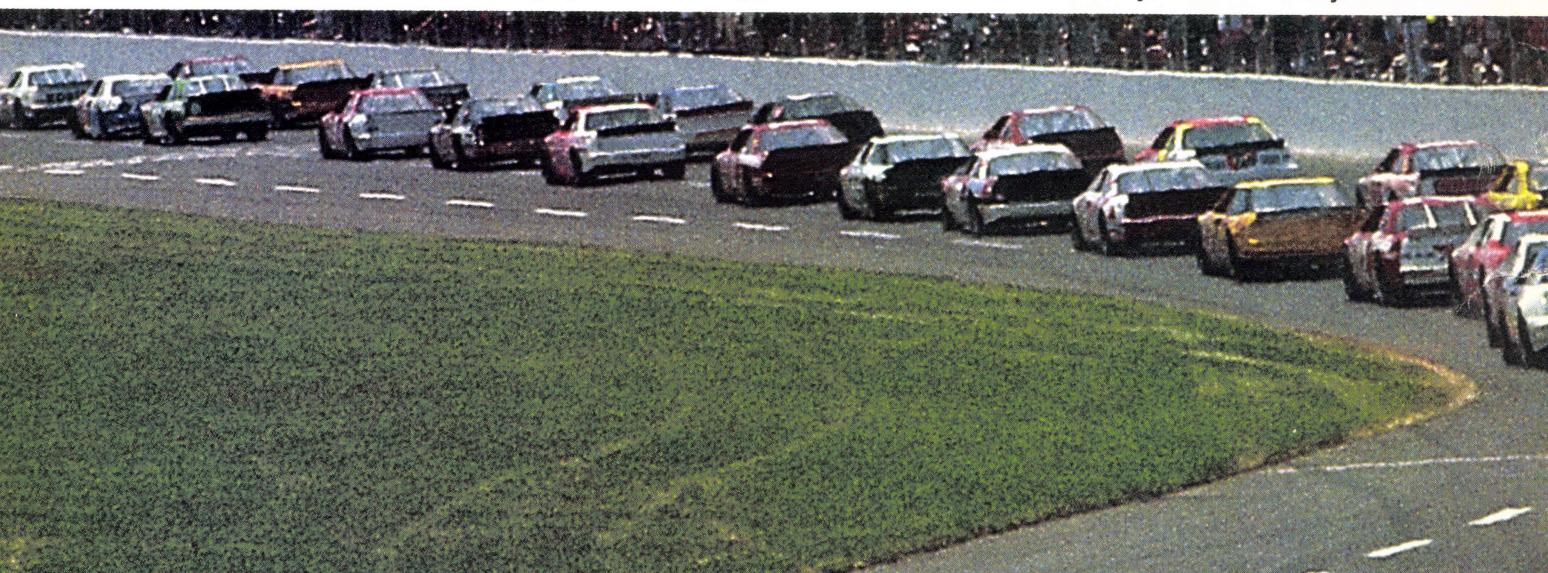
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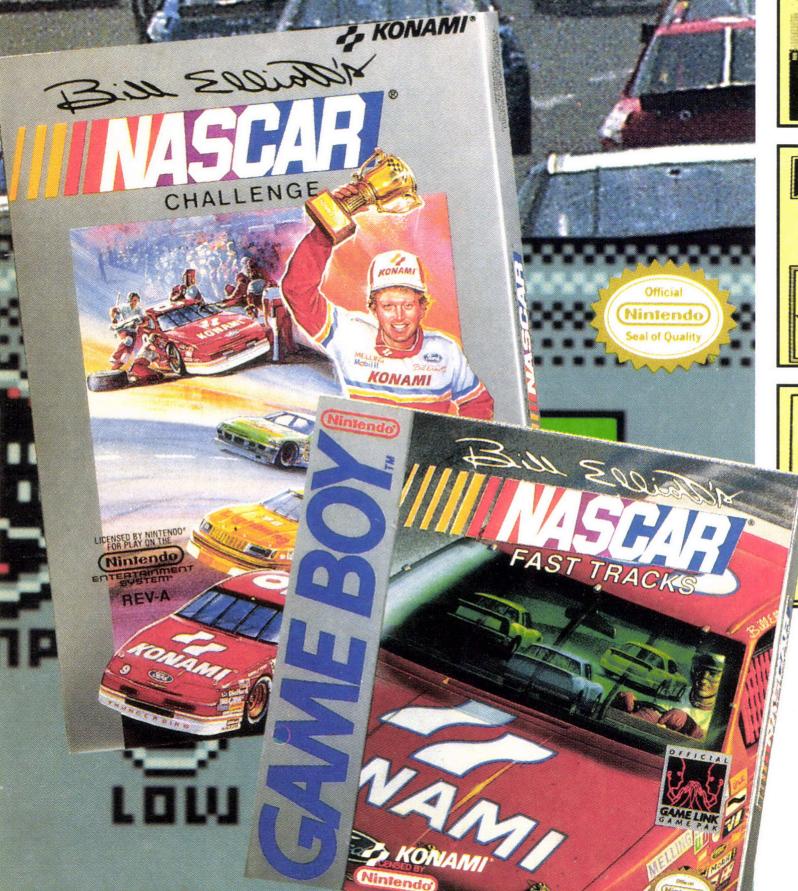
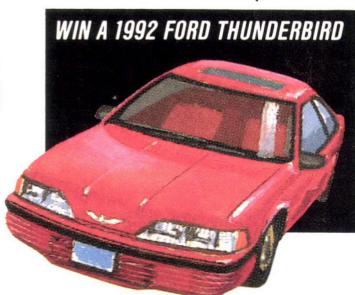
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to meet Bill Elliott and witness the 1992 Daytona 500. Then, each player will compete on the Bill Elliott game version on which they qualified.

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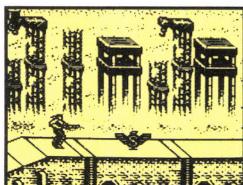
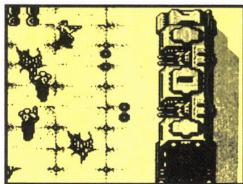
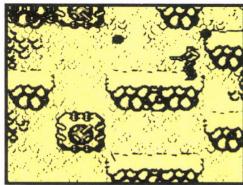
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# GIVE YOUR GAME BOY A TASTE OF COMBAT, CONTRA STYLE.

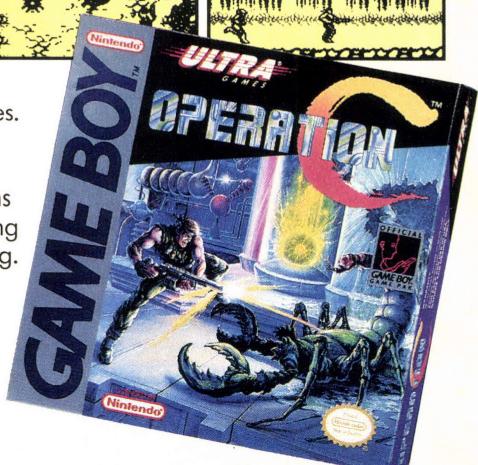
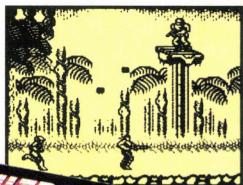
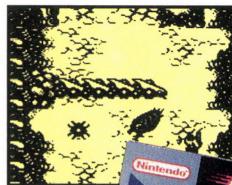


Mmmmm, Operation C™ for Game Boy™ has all the brutal battle flavor of the NES hit Contra™. But here's the bite: this time it's Scorpion alone versus Black Viper—Red Falcon's partner in slime—who's turned a secret naval lab into an experimental alien freak factory.

To blow away Black Viper's pit of hideous genetic mishaps, you must blitz five merciless war zones including Mutant Mountain, Phlegm Forest and the dreaded Cave 'O the Crud Creatures. All infested with zombie snipers, bloodthirsty squid lice, savage spider moths, devastating techno-terrors and more.

Of course, in true Contra style, you'll have to upgrade your arms as you go with Spread Guns, Fire Guns and the all new vermin-seeking Homing Gun. Three lives plus a Continue Mode may keep you going. But Black Viper's awfully hungry and you're going to make a tasty Blue Plate Special.

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CIRCLE #102 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

**Cover:** Once you've played Tradewest's *Battletoads*, it's possible that you will have experienced the hottest NES game of 1991. Turn to page 42 for an in-depth review of this exciting new game.

**Cover Art:** Alan Hunter

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MAY 1991



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*Hey, Gamers! VG&CE has introduced the Games Line, (900) 45-GAMES, to help keep you up-to-date on happenings in the video game world. Don't miss out!*

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by Clayton Walnum

*Don't forget to bring your garlic! This month, Clay leads us up to Dracula's front door.*

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by Chris Bieniek

*Chris reports from "The King" of arcade simulations and shows us what the future of interactive electronic entertainment looks like.*

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by Donn Nauert

*Minnie Mouse has been taken captive by the wicked witch Mizrabel, but no need to worry. In this installment, our guide will help you help Mickey rescue Minnie and get past the Masters of Illusion.*

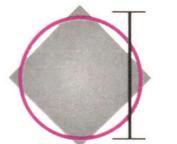
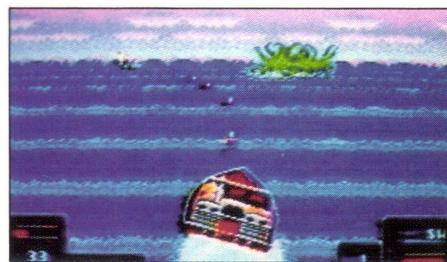


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by Frank Tetro, Jr.

*This month, our computer-game dilettante shows us how to master Ishido and outwit do-gooders in Night Hunter.*

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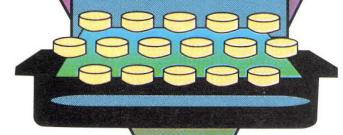
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LETTER

From the



# EDITOR

We've got a small problem: time. You see, the lead time of our magazine—the period between completing production of a magazine and the actual release of that magazine to the public—is such that it can be hard to keep up with news and information in the world of electronic gaming. What could be a fresh story at the moment we put the issue together may be old news by the time it hits your hands.

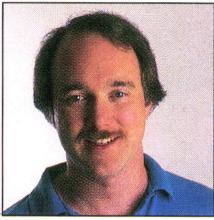
For this reason, we've instituted the VG&CE Games Line, a nationwide number that will let our readers, among other things, stay on top of the news as it happens (turn to page 23 for more information). Between the World of Video Games (our forum on the Delphi online service) and the Games Line, you have lots of ways to get the best information about the ever-changing game industry. In fact, the Games Line's power is that even people who don't have a computer can call the line, and our editors can call to post information instantly, at any time of the day.

Beyond the news aspect, the Games Line will provide our readers with other comprehensive data, such as a preview of the next issue's contents, a frequently updated batch of Easter eggs for all the popular game systems and a place to vote on serious issues that face today's video game enthusiast. But from my perspective, the most exciting feature of the Games Line is its interac-

tivity. After all, isn't that what draws most of us to the sport of electronic gaming anyway?

To date, the other video-game phone lines we've checked into are for listening only, providing reviews, tips and news. VG&CE is sure that our readers want to be more involved. In our case, we give the caller three ways to interact:

- Our *Speak Out!* area lets you offer suggestions and messages to the editors of VG&CE. Have a hot Easter egg that you want published or a comment about VG&CE? This is the place to post it.



- The VG&CE bulletin board section lets you trade information with your fellow game players. Furthermore, you can check what games other players are talking about.

- Finally, the most innovative idea to come along is the VG&CE *Tel-Adventure*, which is a game that you can play over your phone. In the *Tel-Adventure*, we create a storyline and a map of locations—but it's up to you to find your way out safely and in the shortest time possible. In fact, it's possible to win lots of valuable prizes through the *Tel-Adventure*. You won't find many offers like this that give you something back, but we want the Games Line to be informative and, most of all, fun.

All you have to do is call (900) 45-GAMES—it's where the action is!

—Andy Eddy, Executive Editor

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for the Nintendo Entertainment System™



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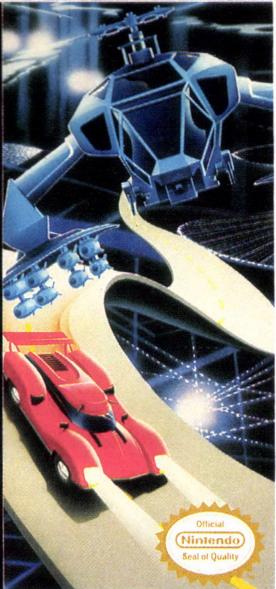
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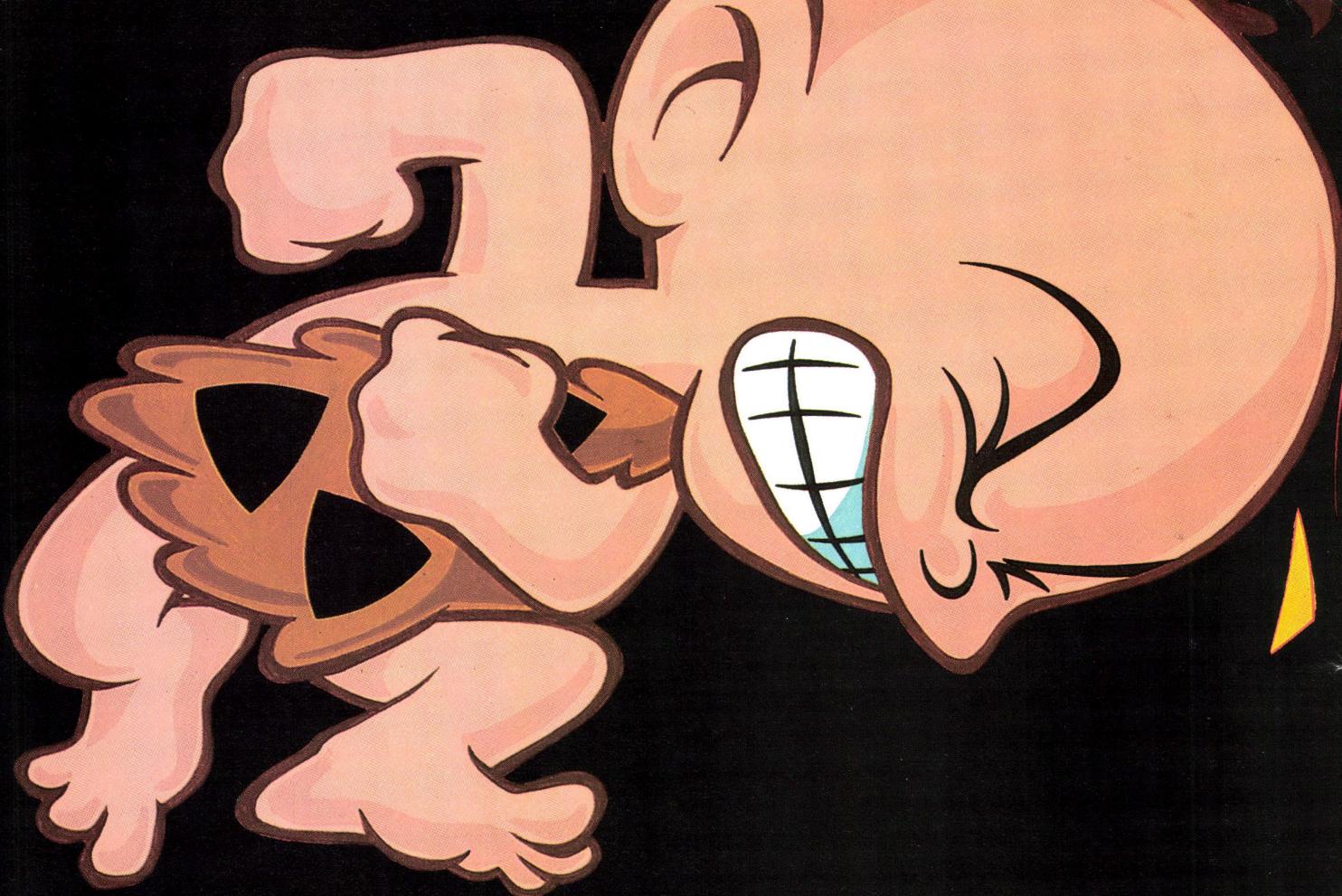
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**IT'S 10,000 YEARS AGO.**

**YOU MUST BONK 28 STAGES OF BAD GUYS  
TO RESCUE YOUR PRINCESS.**

**AND YOU'VE ONLY GOT 1 WEAPON.**

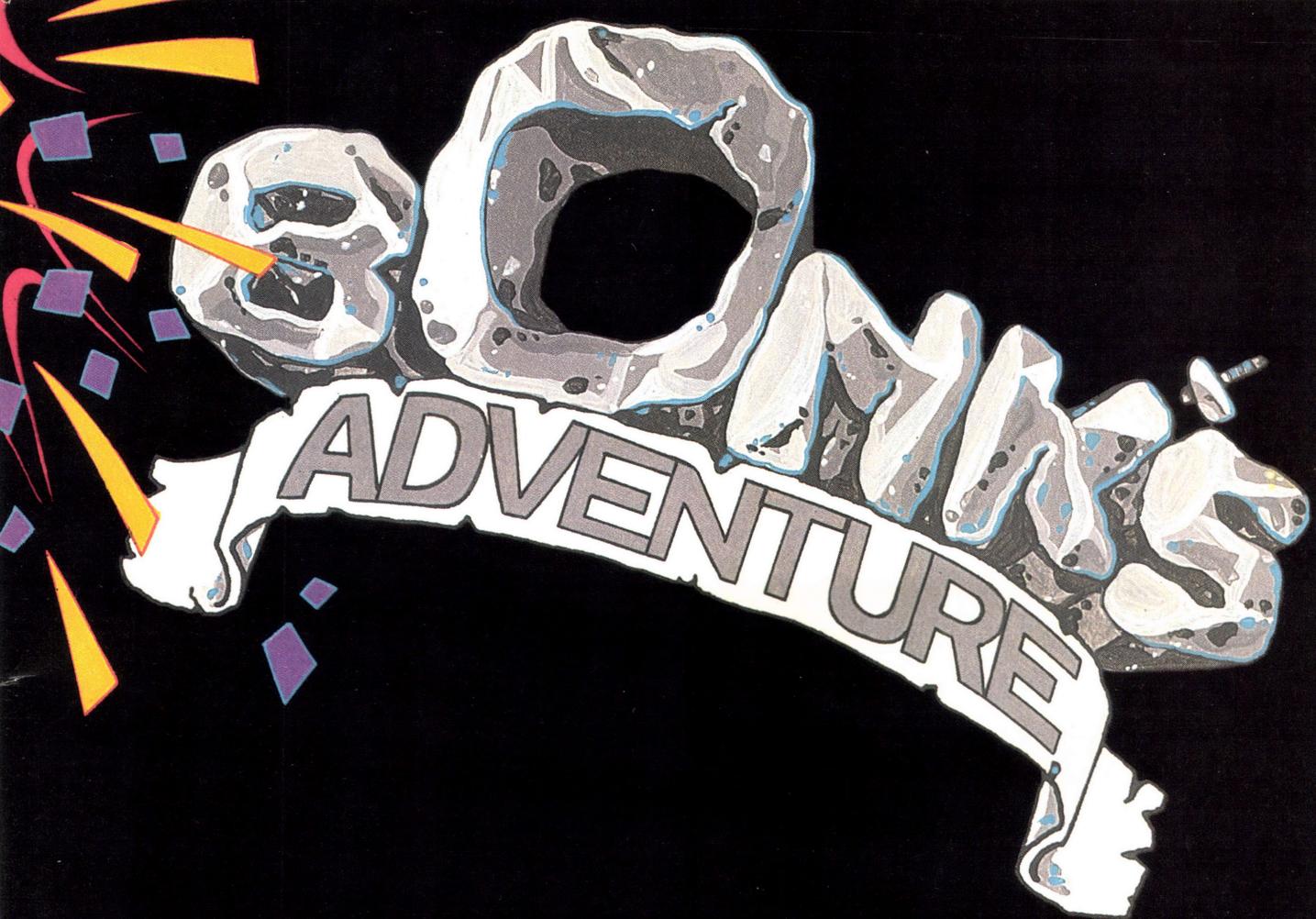
You live in a world of prehistoric swamps, tropical forests and stone age deserts. Humongous dinosaurs, primordial gators and various other slimies, beasties and creepies roam at will.

And the bad news is, evil King Drool has kidnapped

**PREPARE TO BUTT HEADS.**

the Princess Za (a most excellent-looking babe.)

As Bonk, the heroic young Neanderthal head-banger, you will now embark on an epic quest through five levels of monstrous foes to rescue your princess. But there's just one catch. The only weapon you can take with you is your head.

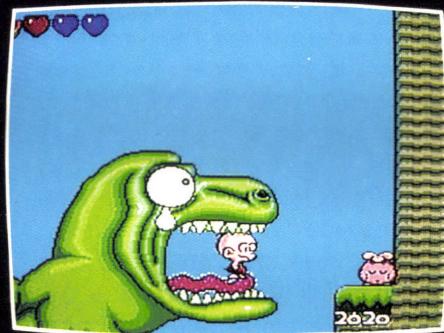


As Bonk, you must battle Huey, the first Boss. Huey is hypnotized, so he forgets he's really your friend. Just keep bonking him on the head to jog his memory.

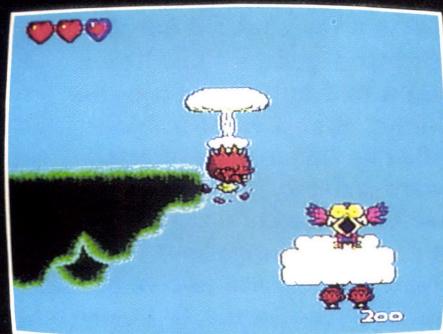
A most heinous boss, Tractor Head, has a deadly beanball fight with Bonk. You can beat him, just use your head.



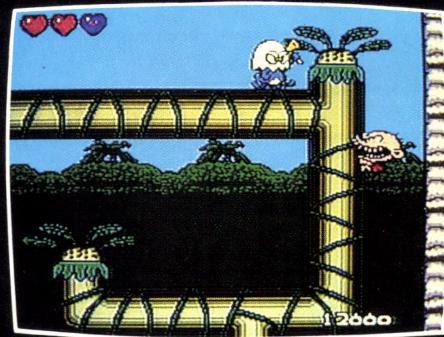
Look for more lives inside the dinosaur. Also remember to check every cave entrance and bonk all walls to find secret bonuses.



Sometimes Bonk needs to climb to get where he's going. Since they hadn't invented the ladder in 10,000 B.C., he uses his teeth.

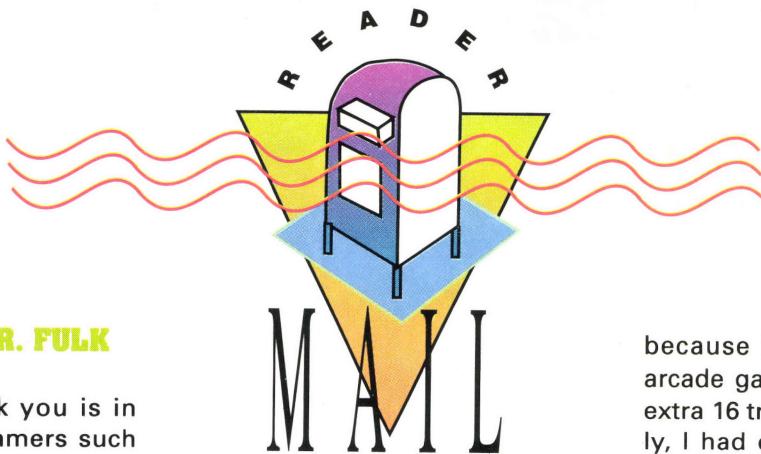


Meat helps Bonk get fired up to beat the bad guys. Like all fast food, you never know when you'll come across it, so keep your eyes peeled.



**TURBO**  
16  
**GRAFX**

**NEC**



## THE RETURN OF MR. FULK

Dear VG&CE:

First, a sincere thank you is in order from hard-core gamers such as myself for providing us with a *real* gaming magazine. Being 27 years old, it is a pleasure for me to read your publication and not have things explained to me as if I were a ten-year-old. The other ten publications—that's right, ten—I subscribe to can sometimes be downright childish. While I realize the majority of gamers are under 16 years of age, there are a large number of us (millions, I would think) who are over 18-years-young. Also, I would have to think that we are the backbone of the industry, simply because we have steady jobs and can continue to make video gaming thrive as far as the economics are concerned. If there is a ten-year-old out there with more games than I own, bought without the help of his parents, then I want his job. While this statement is directed toward gaming mags, it is also directed at the software companies out there in cartridge land.

Next, I would like to give the editors of *VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT* an update. Having written to you in 1990 (published in the September 1991 VG&CE), I was

peeved then about your constant negative comments about Nintendo's business practices. Brother, do I feel silly now. During late 1988 and for most of 1989, Nintendo was producing some really great games. Then all the third-party licensees jumped on the Nintendo bandwagon and ruined everything. Seal of quality? What a joke. On top of that it seems that Nintendo doesn't care. Greed will get you nowhere Nintendo, but that's okay. I'll just take my money elsewhere.

VG&CE's editors suggested trying Sega, so I bought a Genesis system in October 1990. Thank you, VG&CE!

The difference is truly phenomenal. It just doesn't get any better than this. I've been dragging my jaw around for the last five months. How could I have been so...well, stupid. The best part of all is slipping on some headphones and listening to the music and sound effects in true stereo. It practically puts you "inside" the game. I was speechless after playing *Super Monaco GP*. That game made my decision to switch to Sega concrete,

because it is my all-time favorite arcade game. Added to this are the extra 16 tracks in the cartridge. Surely, I had died and gone to heaven. Then came *Thunder Force II* and *III*, *AfterBurner II*, *John Madden Football*, *Joe Montana Football*, *Strider*, *Hard Drivin'*, *Herzog Zwei* and *Populous*. The list goes on, and every one has knocked my socks off! Thank you again for opening my eyes.

Now, having gotten that out, I wish to tell all the third-party licensees out there making games for *any* system a thing or two. First, quality over demand, *please*! Everyone who has been in this hobby the last few years knows what is expected from software companies. Do not, I repeat, do not make a "rushed" game. *We will not buy it*. We do our homework well. I don't subscribe to 11 publications for nothing, you know. Rentals are a real lifesaver also. If it's good, I will buy it. If not, it will sit there on the shelf and rot for all we care. Games are supposed to be fun to play, not to make you ill in the stomach (and

**Letters to be considered for publication should be addressed to Reader Mail, VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210. Letters may be edited for style, clarity and space considerations. We regret that we cannot respond to all mail received.**





# THE NBA'S JAMMIN' ON GAME BOY!



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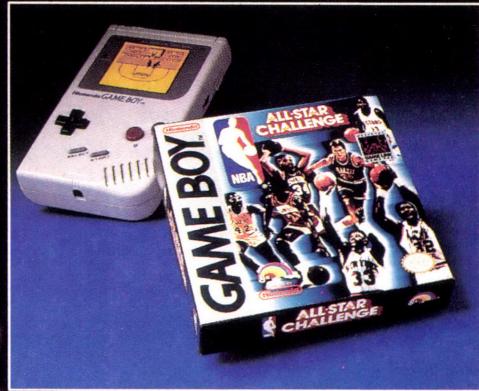
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packed events.

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look real...their moves look real,  
the sounds are real. So, what are  
you waiting for? The 24-second  
clock is running  
and the action's  
FAN-TASTIC!



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CIRCLE #104 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

wallet). Two meg, four meg, eight meg—we don't care as long as it is worth the money and again, fun to play. Some of my personal favorites are games made by Nintendo in 1985-6! I play them all the time, even though they are not close to today's standards of graphics and sound. It all boils down to a three-letter word: FUN.

Last, I would like to comment on the wonderful times we live in, the electronic age. Having grown up playing pinball, *Space Invaders* and *Pac-Man*, I have to say I am really excited by what the future holds for all of us. With all the new systems coming out, CDs and handhelds, the future looks bright for our hobby. I have become so influenced by it that I have gone back to college to get a Bachelor of Science degree in computer science. To all the doomsayers out there who say video games don't do or serve any purpose—I say kiss my chips! See you in the future!

—Darryl Fulk  
Fayetteville, North Carolina

Well, Darryl, it's good to hear from you again. We must express our shock that you have decided to back us up on our original views, but then it's not too surprising. It's just good that you realized there are other diversions besides the Nintendo Entertainment System. And, as you said, the key is the future.

Perhaps one day we'll get another letter from you, Darryl, explaining that you wouldn't possibly consider anything other than your Genesis, and we'll probably have more

advice for you for your next purchase. Then again, it may be that your degree in computer science will have you suggesting to us that the video-game console you designed will be the state-of-the-art. Here's to the future.

should ensure a higher quality of video-game entertainments for all consumers in 1991.

I would like to suggest that you still review all entries between October 1, 1990, and September 30, 1991, but publish your 1991 Video Game Awards in your November 1991 edition of VG&CE.

By publishing the awards at this time of year, the voice of the consumer would finally be heard. Only the video-game companies that produced quality, excellence and new concepts would reap the rewards of Christmas. You would also save a lot of Moms and Dads the frustrations of purchasing a game only to find out that they wasted a lot of money.

Every month I faithfully buy all the video-game magazines. The quality of your magazine could only be achieved by a standard of excellence in all areas of VG&CE's production. Because of these high standards and your total honesty in rating and reviewing all video games, on behalf of all video-game consumers, I hereby award VG&CE the "Video Game Magazine Excellence Award for 1990."

—Melanie Jill Turcotte  
Smiths Falls, Ontario, Canada

As much as we'd like to hand out our awards in an earlier issue, our lead time (the time between creating a magazine and when it hits the newsstands) prevents us from putting our awards in any sooner than the February issue.

Thanks for your award, Melanie. When does the plaque arrive?

### ATARI SOURCE

Dear VG&CE:

In your January 1991 issue, you mentioned that Telegames USA carries 5200 Atari titles and controllers. You failed to mention how to contact Telegames. Please tell me their phone number and address. Thank you, and I really appreciate it.

—Eric Newell  
Baltimore, Maryland

Telegames doesn't carry joysticks anymore, but it still sells 5200 games. The address is 222 West First St., Lancaster, TX 75146; the phone number is (214) 227-0200.



### AWARDS FOR AWARDS

Dear VG&CE:

Owning all three video-game systems, plus one TurboGrafx-CD, is a costly but rewarding feature at times. It allows me the freedom to purchase all the worthy titles, regardless of who makes it. Once again, VG&CE, I'm very pleased with your selections of the 1990 Video Games Awards. *Castle of Illusion* and *Strider*, plus Nintendo's new 16-bit system and two new CD units,



# "BEST SCIENCE FICTION COMPUTER GAME OF THE YEAR"

— Video Games & Computer Entertainment



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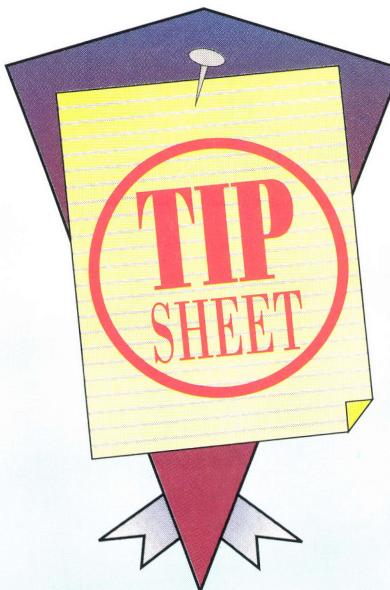
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**E**ven the best player has trouble with a game now and again, but where can you turn for help? **VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT** has designed **Tip Sheet** to give you, the reader, answers to questions such as "How do I defeat the end boss on this level?" or "I've looked everywhere, but I can't find the blue vase." So if you're having a problem on a game, write to us, and our group of experts will do everything they can to solve it. Send your letters to

**VG&CE,**  
**9171 Wilshire Blvd.,**  
**Suite 300**  
**Beverly Hills, CA**  
**90210**  
**Attn: Tip Sheet**



## by Donn Nauert

I recently bought the Genesis game *D.J. Boy*, by Kaneko, and I am having trouble getting past the boss for the second level. Can you help me?

—Joel LeFohn  
 Sacramento, California

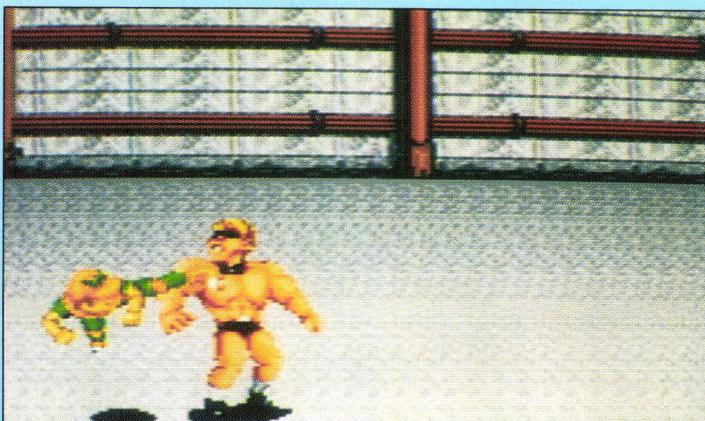
The trick in getting past the second level boss is to do jump kicks as often as possible. If you have the Power Stick, you can set it for auto fire and then hold down the buttons. By following this technique, D.J. can move

up and down the screen while still facing the same direction, which will allow him to get into position to kick the boss easily.

I've killed many bosses and demons in my day as a video villain slayer, but there's one villain who slays back with a burn—that's the villain at the end of Level 3-2 in *Werewolf—The Last Warrior*, by Data East. If there are any tips, I'd like to know them.

—Michael R. White  
 Williamston, North Carolina

I'm sorry there are no level selects or invincibility codes for this game that we know of. As far as the level boss, once you're on the screen with the boss, try moving on top of the block on the left and punch as quickly as possible. After you hit him and he backs up, jump straight up into the air and do a somersault. The end boss should pass underneath you to the left and then run off the screen to the right. Now position yourself a tad left of center on the screen. The end boss should fly at you from the top right. As soon as he appears on the screen, move just enough to the right that you don't get hit by him, then move in and punch. He should fly off the screen to the top left. Repeat this until he is defeated, and you'll be home free.



**Jump kicking as often as possible will help you get past the boss in the second level of *D.J. Boy*.**

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invincibility, during the title screen, press U, U, Up, U, D, L, R and U.



I own a TG-16, and one of the older games, *China Warrior*, has given me trouble for quite some time. On Stage 3-1, Boss Li Oushan has frustrated me. I can just about walk through the game, until I face him. Do you have any tips that might work for him or the whole game itself? And do you have anything for Ordyne as well?

—Kurt A. Bohmueller  
Churchville,  
Pennsylvania



**Veteran video gamers will have trouble defeating the boss at the end of Level 3-2 in Werewolf—The Last Warrior.**

I purchased the game called *Astyanax* by Jaleco. On Level 6-1, what are the signs you have to look for, and which doors do you go in? I desperately need help.

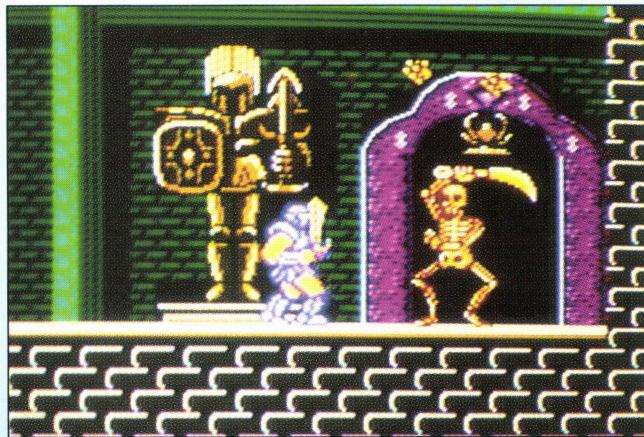
—Jason Miller  
Fort Gordon, Georgia

Anytime a skeleton appears in a doorway, go through that door—that's the sign you're looking for.

There are some other codes for this game as well. For a level select, during the title screen, press U, D, L, R and then the "B" button four times. For

## STAGE SELECT

STAGE 2-1	STAGE 4-2
STAGE 2-2	STAGE 5-1
STAGE 3-1	STAGE 5-2
STAGE 3-2	STAGE 6-1
STAGE 4-1	STAGE 6-2



**In Jaleco's *Astyanax*, keep an eye out for any skeletons appearing in doorways.**

Probably the easiest thing to do against Li Oushan, if you have the health, is to let him hit you three times then blast him with a special punch that you got by letting him hit

you. It will take two of these special punches to defeat him.

As for other help, for a debug mode, during the title screen, press **RUN** and **SELECT** to reset the game then release **RUN** during the title screen and press **U** once. Finally, release the **SELECT** button and press **U** three times, **R** six times, **D** twice and **L** twice.

For Ordyne, reset the game five times (by pressing **RUN** and **SELECT**), then hold **U** and **L** and press **RUN** for a debug mode.



**As strange as it sounds, letting Li Oushan hit you in *China Warrior* will give you a special punch that will let you defeat him.**

STAGE	1	2	3	4
SCENE	1	2	3	
PLAYER	NORMAL	INVINCIBLE		
ENEMY	NORMAL	INVINCIBLE		
LEFT	3	1	6	10 20 255

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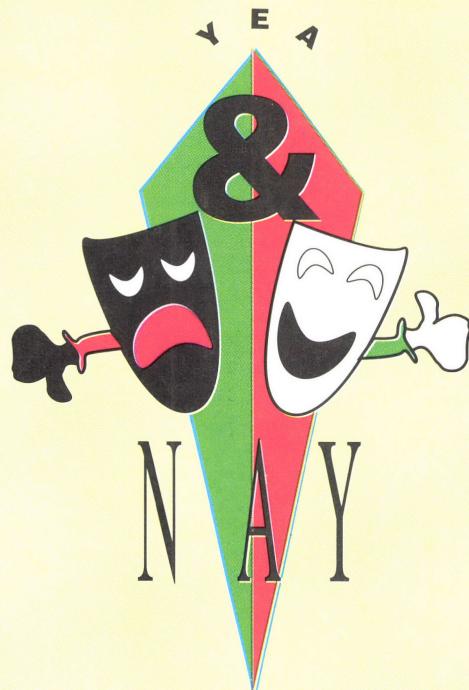
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**Yea & Nay** is an inside look at the high and low points in the electronic-game industry. It's an opportunity for the companies that decide what games we'll be playing to be patted on the back or slammed to the mat for what they do. If you want to give credit where credit is due—whether the company belongs in the Hall of Fame or Hall of Shame—send your opinions to VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, Attn: Yea & Nay. Let's hear how you feel!



## YEA

In the last issue, we noted the results of Sega's contest in Hawaii (see picture below). At the WCES (Winter Consumer Electronics Show), we also heard that Nintendo will bring its Campus Challenge around the U.S. We applaud these efforts to bring some of the profits back to the player in the way of prizes and competition with other gamers. These contests are a great way to bring lots of players together, solving the "I'm better than you are" claims. The best result, though, is the beaming smiles of the combatants as they strive for the finest scores they can. Let's keep up these events!



WCES brought a lot of traffic in the way of programmers and developers through Atari's booth. Lynx fans should respond to this with new-found optimism.

## YEA



With its new \$99 Lynx (shown in picture below),

Atari is obviously trying to get the color portable in the hands of more gamers and take a swing at Nintendo's Game Boy. It's moves like this that can bring grins to gamers' lips—and wallets—because it means more people will have a Lynx, so more players will be able to "Lynx-up." The bottom line, though, is that a larger consumer base will prompt more software developers to get involved in creating compatible products, something that has been a limiting factor in more people buying the Lynx at its original price. In fact, Atari's announcement of the \$99 price at the

## NAY



As you may have noticed in the last couple of issues of **VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER**

ENTERTAINMENT, games for the TG-16 have been few and far between. It's unfortunate that after the decent flow of software around Christmas, more new products didn't continue to hit store shelves.

We're crossing our fingers that NEC will follow up this lull with a bonanza of new titles and stick to its promise of having 50% of its 1991 product out in CD format. (We also hope more licensees will create software for the TG-16, but we'll take one wish at a time.)



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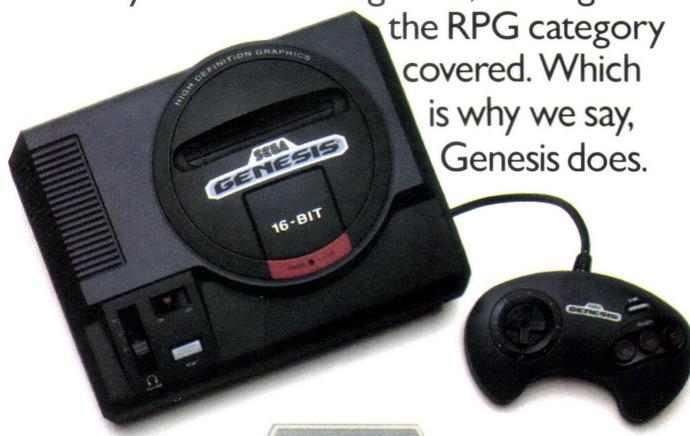
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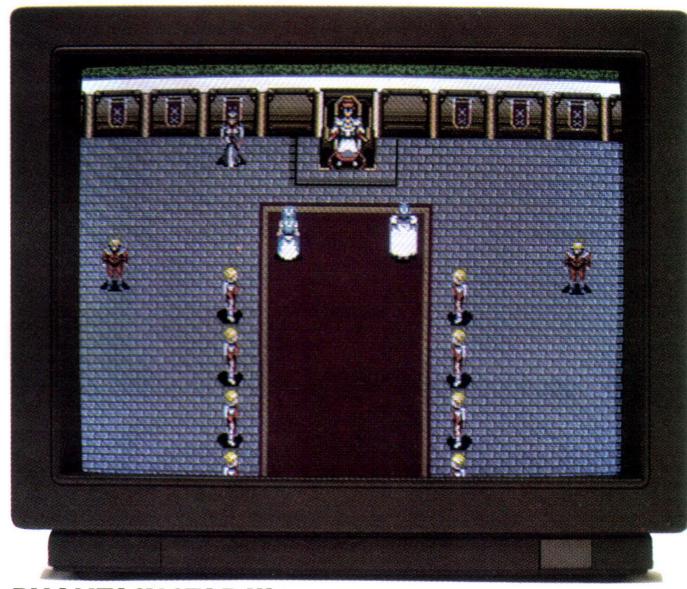
## PHANTASY STAR II:

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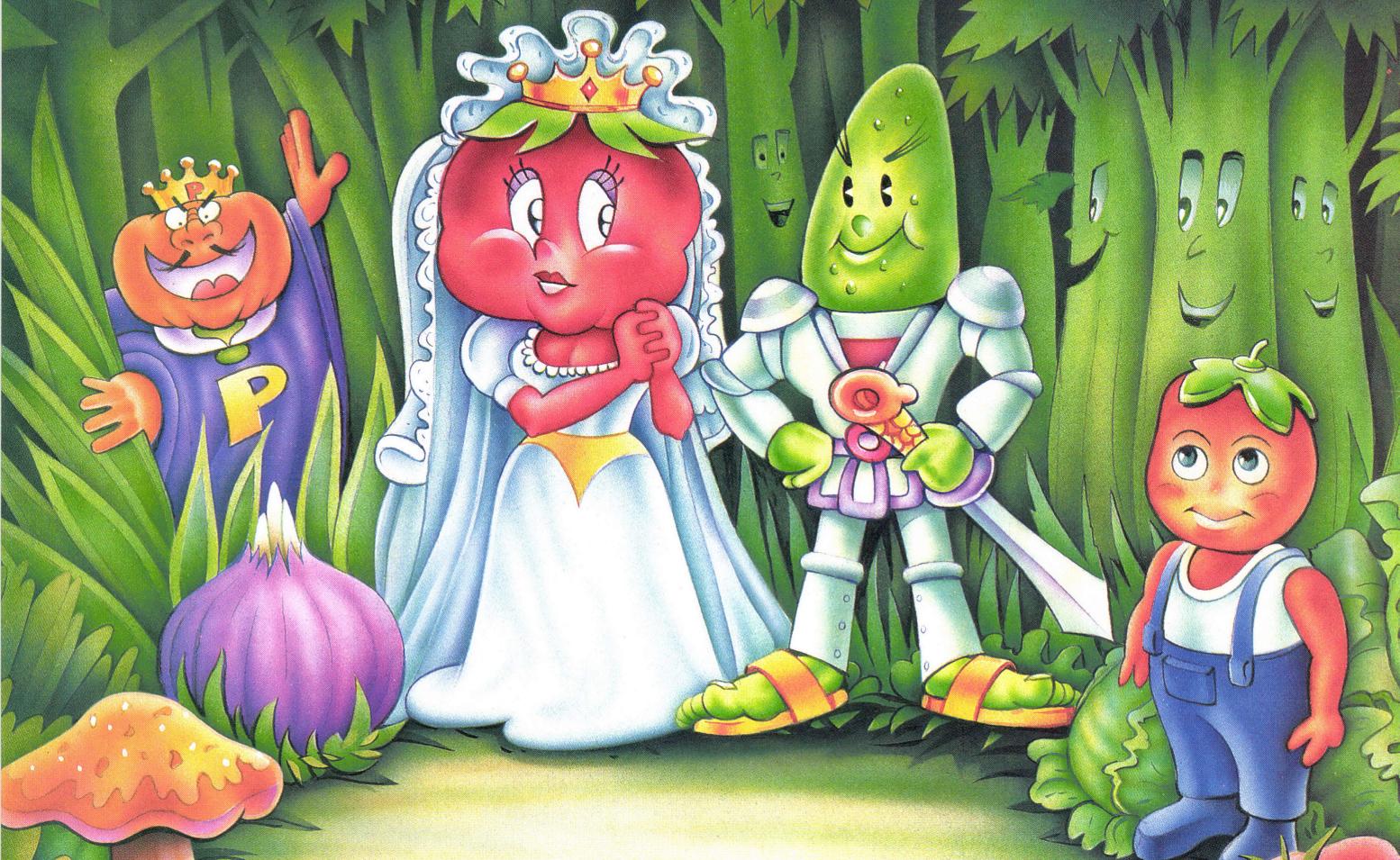
Awarded "Best Genesis Fantasy Role Playing Game" by Game Players Magazine. Sword of Vermilion combines the classic aspects of RPG with an innovative sideview combat system and Genesis sound and graphics.



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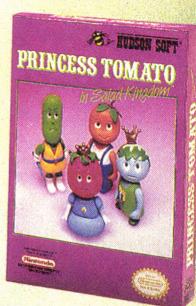
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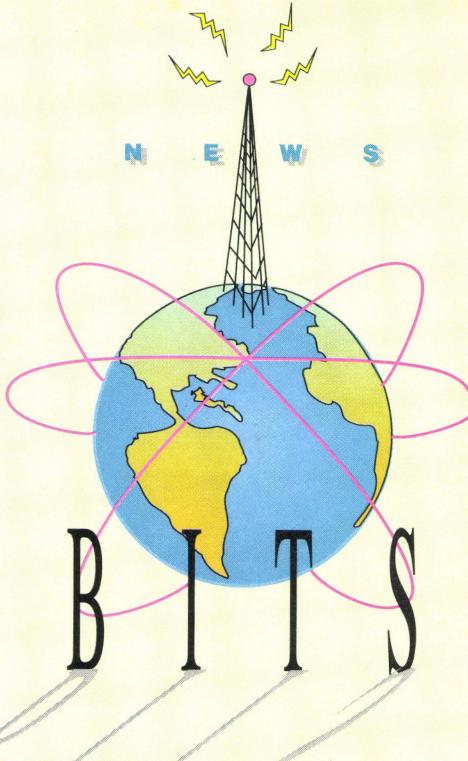
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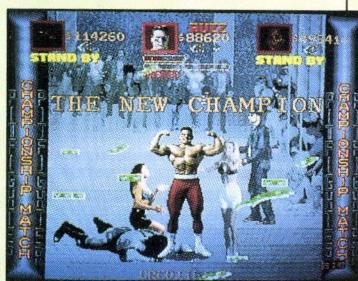
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### Genesis, TurboGrafx-16 Get Digitized Graphics

Tengen introduced advanced technology that will bring digitized graphics to home 16-bit video gaming. *Pit Fighter*, based on Atari's coin-op game, uses digitized movements from films of live actors to create a wrestling/kick-boxing match. The game is scheduled to come out on the Sega Genesis in autumn 1991.

In a VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT exclusive, a spokesperson for Tengen revealed that the company has also begun development of *Pit Fighter*



for play on NEC's TurboGrafx-16. The shipment date has not yet been scheduled but may be as soon as the fourth quarter.

Ted Hoff, Tengen's senior vice-president of sales, explained why they are so

excited about the new process. "When we saw the tremendous success of this title in the arcades, we were determined to bring the advanced technology and exciting realism of digitally processed graphics to home systems." He went on to add, "We do have an advantage having Atari Games as a parent company. Its coin-op titles are known worldwide as leading the industry in technology and creativity, and we are able to capitalize on that heritage for home systems."

### Atari Reconfigures Computer

Atari is now marketing an enhanced configuration of the 1040ST. Dubbed the 1040STE, the machine is fully compatible with existing ST software packages.

New features include an extended color palette, hardware scrolling and digital stereo sound. It has one megabyte of RAM, uses a Motorola 68000 microprocessor and operates at 8 MHz. It utilizes the latest TOS operating system, improved memory management and user interfacing and an improved graphics interface that uses icons. The 1040STE retails for under \$600.

According to Sam Tramiel, chief executive officer of Atari Corp., "The system is designed for serious home computing and small business professional use."

### Nuby Turns up the Volume for Game Boys

Nuby Manufacturing (a branch of Curtis Manufacturing in Jaffrey, New Hampshire) introduced the *Game Boy Amplifier*, which turns up the sound level for the portable player. The \$14.95 gadget plugs directly into the unit's headphone jack, then provides stereo sound through minispeakers. It's powered by a 9-volt battery or AC adapter (not included).

The *Game Boy Amplifier* tested by VG&CE delivered a good volume of sound, mostly consisting of beeps and boops, through the speakers provided (sound is not a major ingredient of

Game Boy programs).

Nuby's *Game Boy Amplifier* joins other enhancements designed to make big things out of the little game machines. Products already available from Nuby for the Nintendo Game Boy include the *Nuby Game Light*, *Game Boy Magnifier*, *Game Caddy*, *Carry Case* and *Game Pak Carry Case*.

### Mediagenic Makes Management Changes

Mediagenic reached agreement with BHK Technologies Corp. to make changes in the company's board of directors and management, in return for establishment of an accounts receivable-based line of credit for the company.

BHK, which owns roughly 25% of Mediagenic's outstanding common stock, will provide \$2.5 million of additional financing during the next 12 months. Among the changes brought about by the agreement is expansion of the board of directors from four members to five. Four of the five seats will be filled by BHK appointees. Bruce Davis, former chairman and CEO, will continue as a director and vice chairman. Robert A. Kotick will take over as chairman and CEO. Keith C. Moore will become chief operating officer and Brian Kelly will be chief financial officer.

Bruce Davis explained that although the nature of the financing and related terms are still under negotiation, "the board of directors of Mediagenic believes that the board and management



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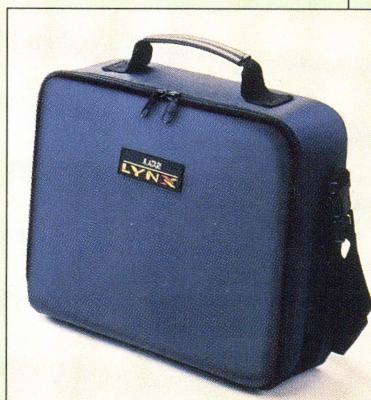
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changes being affected by this agreement will enable the company to more effectively address its existing financial and operational difficulties."

### Lynx Gets New Stripes

Atari Entertainment has developed a whole wardrobe of Lynx accessories. The company announced plans for a line of products designed to enhance the handheld video game system's portability.

The Atari Lynx charcoal-gray nylon carrying case holds the game system, 12 cartridges, a cigarette-lighter adapter, an AC adapter, ComLynx cables for multi-play, a sun visor and spare AA batteries. The \$19.95 case



stores game cards in transparent pockets and has padded compartment walls with velcro interior hinges so the inside can be customized. It has a carrying handle and a shoulder strap.

The Lynx Pouch holds the Lynx, ComLynx cables, spare batteries and games. The small gray bag has both a wrist strap and belt loop, for \$14.95.

The Lynx sun visor/screen guard snaps over the LCD screen to make it possible to play the Lynx even in sunlight. When not in use, the \$4.95 visor snaps down over

the unit to protect the color screen.

For travelers, the Lynx cigarette lighter adapter plugs into any standard car lighter. The \$19.95 adapter has two outlets, so two systems can be powered simultaneously.

### Data East to Use

#### Intel's New Technology

Data East USA has the exclusive rights to develop arcade video games using Intel's digital video interactive (DVI) technology. According to spokespeople from the two companies, the Intel DVI i750 video processor will produce coin-operated games with graphic images that approach the quality of film.

DVI components provide high-performance storage and retrieval of large blocks of animated graphics on CD-ROM media. Data East will combine the Intel processor with its own hardware and software to form a system that sends large amounts of information to the monitor, to create movielike motion.

Joseph Keenan, Data East president, said, "For the first time, arcade games will have graphics with the intensity, depth and realism of film animation."

The first coin-op to use the process, *Thunderstorm* (a helicopter action game introduced in Japan last year), will be available in the U.S. before summer 1991.

### Alladin's Castle, Channel M, Cosponsor Tournament

The Channel M Video Wall Network, and Aladdin's Castle Family Entertainment Centers are cosponsors of a three-month national tournament to be held in 50 Aladdin's Castle locations



across the country. The event started March 1 and will culminate on May 30.

Every Aladdin's Castle patron is invited to register for the contest. Each participating store will draw 50 players to compete in the Power Play 7 Tournament. The contestants are required to play seven different arcade games for the top total combined score. Everyone who plays gets a T-shirt, and top scorers win cash prizes and merchandise awards.

Games featured in the tournament

are: *Bad Dudes*, *RoboCop* (both Data East), *Mercs* (Capcom), *Ms. Pac Man* (Midway), *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* (Konami), *Pit Fighter*, *Pole Position 2* (both Atari) and *Super Off Road* (Leland). One nonarcade game is also used at some locations, *Hoop Shot* (Doyle & Assoc.).

Information about the tournament and registration requirements are available at participating Aladdin's Castles.

### Clue Book Update

Origin Systems' *Quest For Clues, Volume 3*, is now available. It's reported to feature 198 pages of walkthroughs, maps and solutions to 40 top adventure and fantasy role-playing computer games from the past year, compiled by Shay Addams and staff.

Some of the games included in the book are *Circuit's Edge* (Infocom), *Future Wars* (Interplay), *Gold Rush* (Sierra), *Bad Blood* (Origin), *Champions of Krynn* (SSI), *Star Flight I & II*, (Electronic Arts) and over 30 more adventure and role-playing games.

The book is available for \$24.99 at software and book stores.

### Accolade, U.S. Gold Agree in U.S.

U.S. Gold, one of Europe's

leading entertainment software developer/publishers, signed an exclusive North American distribution deal with Accolade. The first games distributed under this new agreement are *International Soccer*, *Gold of the Aztec*, *Vaxine*, and *Rotox*, all available in IBM PC and Amiga versions.

Allan Epstein, president and CEO of Accolade, remarked, "We recognize that high-quality European games, like those from U.S. Gold, are more and more suited to North American audiences, and we look forward to helping U.S. Gold achieve that same reputation and image here in the U.S. as they have in Europe."

All four games will hit retail stores by summer.

### Free Upgrade From Spectrum HoloByte

Ad Lib sound card support, better joystick control, debugged armament release and debriefing screens are some of the enhancements available in the 1.2 version of Spectrum HoloByte's *Flight of the Intruder*. The game, based on a popular novel by Stephen Coonts, deals with air combat over North Vietnam in 1972.

Additional fixes include aircraft carrier display, support for dual joysticks and the ability to save menu configurations. A "patch disk" contains updated files that overwrite originals, so the original disk is still required.

All registered owners of the 1.0 or 1.1 versions of *Flight of the Intruder* can contact the Customer Support Department at (415) 522-1164 to receive their free upgrade.

### Top Coin-ops of January 1991

Figures are courtesy of Replay magazine, based on an earnings-opinion poll of operators.

### Best Upright Videos

1. *Race Drivin'* by Atari
2. *Pit-Fighter* by Atari
3. *Hard Drivin'* by Atari
4. *Space Gun* by Taito
5. *TMNT (Turtles)* by Konami
6. *Galaxy Force* by Sega



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For more information  
please contact:  
National Sales Department  
Telephone: 213/286-7040  
Fax: 213/286-7039

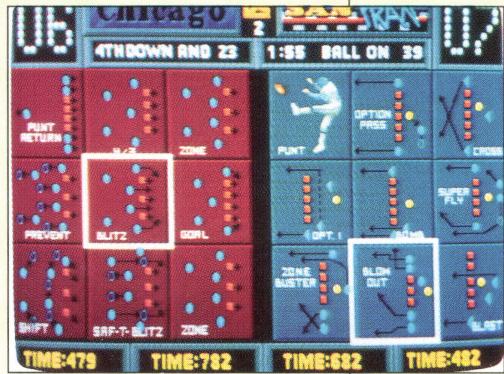
7. *G-Loc* by Sega
8. *Four Trax* by Atari
9. *Final Lap* by Atari
10. *Team Quarterback* by Leland

#### Best Coin-Op Software

1. *Ninja Combat* by SNK
2. *Final Fight* by Capcom
3. *Raiden* by Fabtek
4. *Magic Sword* by Capcom
5. *Strata Bowling* by Strata
6. *Cyberlip* by SNK
7. *Super Spy* by SNK
8. *Off Road Trak Pak* by Leland
9. *Carrier Air Wing* by Capcom
10. *Blood Bros.* by Fabtek

#### Best New Videos

1. *Cisco Heat* by Jaleco
2. *GP Rider* by Sega



#### Live Action Football Hits Arcades

Williams Electronics has introduced what the company calls "the first live action video football game" to play-for-pay parlors. *High Impact Football* provides 15 teams for one to four players and over 40 authentic offensive plays and defensive formations.

Williams used digitized graphics for maximum realism and sparked the action with such extras as cheerleaders, coaches and jeering fans. On-screen movement is controlled by a joystick and action button.



#### Fuji Promotion Offers Free Disks Again

Fuji Photo Film USA has a good deal for disk buyers. Specially marked ten-packs of Fuji high-density floppies contain a free 11th disk, marking a repeat of highly successful promotions from previous years.

Jeff Ash, Fuji's marketing manager for the computer media division, explained the repetition of previous years' sales promotions. "Resellers indicate that free 11th disks are Fuji's most popular promotions. By featuring high density disks, we expect this year's program to be the most successful ever."

The promotional packs of disks retail for \$33.30 (3.5") and \$19.90 (5.25").

#### Lynx Library Expands

Atari will release 16 new game titles during the first half of 1991, bringing the total to over 30 games available for the Lynx portable game system. Retail prices for the new titles range from \$29.95 to \$39.95. Many take advantage of the ComLynx for multiplay, and some allow up to eight players to link up for head-to-head play.

New titles introduced are *World Class Soccer*, recreating the sport for one to four players; *Ninja Gaiden*, based on the Techmo hit, featuring martial arts for one to two players; *Blockout* from California Dreams, a 3-D cube-stacker for one player; *Xybots*, in which one to two players battle robots through mazes; *Shanghai*, from Mediagenic, a strategy game

similar to mah-jongg, for one to two players; *Warbirds*, in which one to six pilots recre-



ate historical dogfights; *NFL Football*, for one to four players; *Vindicators*, a tank mission for one to two players; *Grid Runner*, one to four players racing through tubes and construction sites; *TurboSub*, simulation submarine war for one to two players; *Checkered Flag*, Formula 1 racing for one to six players; *A.P.B.*, setting one player as the good guy, against criminals; *Scrapyard Dog*, a one-player mission to rescue a kidnapped dog; and *Tournament Cyberball 2072*, which puts one to four jet-pack equipped players into a futuristic game of football.

According to Atari Entertainment President Lawrence Siegel, "This is only the beginning." He explained that they have ongoing relationships with game software developers

and NEC TurboGrafx-16 video games. The version for Nintendo games was introduced in 1989.

The Eliminator cleaning kits were designed by Naki founder Herschel Naghi. As the owner of a video store, he observed that distortions and intermittent signals occurred when oxide built up on the video-game contacts. The Eliminator inserts into the video-game system, locks in position, then engages and cleans the electrical contacts of the circuit board connector block. The system was granted a patent August 28, 1990. Since that date, Naki has filed suit against Innovations Etc. to halt the marketing of a cleaner that they claim infringes the Eliminator patent and received a preliminary injunction to halt sale of the product.

The company either has, or is negotiating for, licenses from all major video game hardware manufacturers, and the product is now in distribution in the U.S., Canada, Mexico and Western Europe.

#### Tee Off, Glove Up, Then Cap Off With Games

Manufacturers want gamers to be well-dressed, or so it would seem. A few companies are giving soft wear with the software, as a special bonus for purchasers.

Psygnosis packed *The Shadow of the Beast II* in an oversized box that also contains a spiffy black T-shirt emblazoned with the leaping-beast emblem of the game. There are no guarantees that the shirt provides any armor protection

whatsoever against the Beast Lord, but it's a handsome style-statement.

Gamers who purchase Kaneko's *Air Buster* get a bonus that might even make them better scorers! The second Sega Genesis game from this publisher, *Air Buster*, comes packed with a free Kaneko video glove.



and that there are currently over 20 more arcade, sports, fantasy and action games in various stages of completion.

#### Naki Wins Injunction, Goes Multisystem

Naki Industries is expanding their line of Eliminator game cleaners to include Sega, Genesis, Atari Lynx

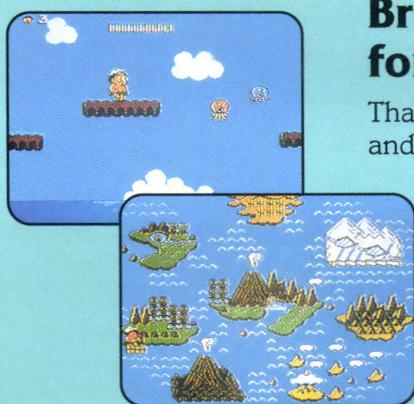
# ADVENTURE ISLAND II™



## More Fun in the Sun with Adventure Island II™

**Break out the sunscreen and take off for Adventure Island II.™**

That Evil Witch Doctor's at it again. He's grabbed your latest honey and dares you to do something about it. □ But this is no day at the beach. You've gotta fight your way past EIGHT treacherous islands! Including a Dinosaur Kingdom with some of the creepiest critters ever to slither across a video screen. Volcanoes. Avalanches. Giant Scorpions. Killer Cobras. We're talkin' one tough Witch Doctor here! And the action really heats up with a new vertical/horizontal scroll. Plus, stage select lets you control play. □ ADVENTURE ISLAND II. A sure-fire scorcher! Look for it wherever you buy the best video games.



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**HUDSON SOFT**®

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South San Francisco, CA 94080



Although it doesn't make any promises, it should at least help the pilot avoid blisters, in this one- or two-player aerial battle.

Konami has headgear for players. *Back to the Future II* (available for Amiga, Commodore 64 and IBM PC) comes packed with a sports cap that matches the one Marty wore in the flick. There's no word as to whether the hat will make the puzzles easier to solve, but it will keep the head warm while traveling through time and recreating key scenes from the movie.

#### Konami Contest Gives Trips, Car

The Konami contest in support of *Bill Elliott's NASCAR Challenge* has a lavish set of prizes to get every racer's motor revved. Computer players must run all eight courses included on the disk, then send in a photo of the score with the entry form (packed with the game) before July 22.

Ten second-prize winners will get Bill Elliott/Konami racing jackets. Five first-prize winners will receive Bill Elliott remote control race cars. The top three scorers will each receive trips for two to the 1992 Daytona 500, where they'll meet with Bill Elliott. While at Daytona, under Elliott's supervision, the three will compete for the top prize, a 1992 Ford Thunderbird Super Coupe.

The NES version of the game also contains a contest entry form. The prizes offered for NESers include the auto, trips, racing jackets and a clutch of handheld games from Konami.

The official entry form

asks for the name and address of the store where the game was purchased. Retailers named on the winning entries will also get prizes from Konami.

#### Bill Elliott's NASCAR Challenge

*NASCAR Challenge* is a stock car simulation designed by Distinctive Software (*Test Drive*). It combines bit-mapped graphics with a scaling technique to create realistic images of the race and pit stops, uses a VCR replay mode with six playback camera locations and has a customizing kit to adapt the car.

#### Game Genie Out of the Bottle in Canada

The Federal Court of Canada denied Nintendo's application for an injunction to halt sales of Camerica Corporation's Game Genie. In his remarks, Justice Paul Rouleau said, "The plaintiff (Nintendo) had not demonstrated the loss of a single sale in spite of the fact that the defendant Camerica

started shipping Game Genie to customers in June 1990." The decision means that Camerica will continue distribution of the device in Canada, where it is currently available for \$70 to \$80 at K-Mart, Toys "R" Us, Woolco and several other Canadian chains.

The Game Genie video-game enhancer attaches to video-game cartridges, then both insert into the game deck. The Genie then "grants three wishes" to the player to make the game harder or easier to play. The changes do not affect the original programming of the game.

Nintendo claimed that by making games easier to play, the Genie would make its software boring and thereby reduce sales. David Harding, president of Camerica, countered that argument, citing "hundreds of letters and phone calls from satisfied Game Genie owners." He went on to say, "The Nintendo Entertainment System can only be enhanced, not harmed, by the addition of our peripheral. In fact, I predict an increase in sales of Nintendo products as a direct result of the Game Genie."

American distribution of the Game Genie is still held up by court injunction. A hearing on the matter is scheduled soon.

#### Acclaim Announces First Product for Super NES

Acclaim announced its support of Nintendo's new 16-bit Super NES (Super Famicom) system, which will be introduced later this year. The first 16-bit entertainment cartridge from Acclaim will be a title based on *The Simpsons*. The company expects to have the 16-bit *Simpsons* game ready before Christmas 1991, and at least two other Super NES games by end of the year.

Robert Holmes, Acclaim's president, remarked, "As leaders in this industry it is appropriate that Acclaim is one of the first entertainment companies to actively support Nintendo's new system in the US." He went on to state, "We continue to

produce software to support the 28-million-plus American households that already own an NES."

#### Sierra Multi-Media Package Postponed

In a surprise announcement, Sierra President Ken Williams revealed that his company will postpone its multimedia hardware package until June 1991. "After discussions with leading hardware suppliers, it has become apparent that a new evolution of hardware will be available later this year which will exceed many existing standards. Our decision was made in an effort to avoid selling our customers a multimedia package that will become obsolete in a short period of time."

One of the reasons for the delay is Sierra's intention to be compatible with Microsoft's Level Two Multimedia Standard. This has required reconfiguration of the Sierra hardware package. According to company reports, the new product will be commercial quality, state-of-the-art hardware, but Sierra intends to hold its original price point of approximately \$750.

#### CDTV Update

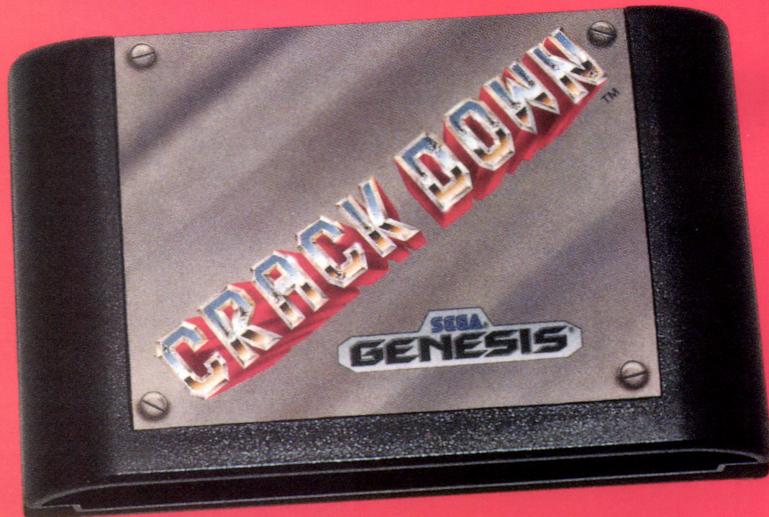
In a VG&CE exclusive interview, Commodore's Gail Wellington explained the current timetable for the roll-out of their new CDTV. Early in January the company predicted a delay, if war started. Although the Middle East conflict caused some change in the original schedules, the delays amounted to no more than a couple of weeks.

CDTV's mid-March introduction puts the new hardware in Chicago, Los Angeles and San Francisco. By May, the company expects CDTV to be on the market in several other cities. CDTV should be available nationwide by the end of summer 1991.

According to Ms. Wellington, 40 software packages have been available for the CDTV since the end of March, and more are scheduled for release throughout the year.



# THIS TINY GAME HAS 1,253 ENEMY SOLDIERS, 392 TIME DELAY BOMBS, 140 LASER CANNONS, 28 SINKHOLES, AND ONE KICKBUTT ATTITUDE.



## BUT IT STILL HAS ROOM FOR YOU.

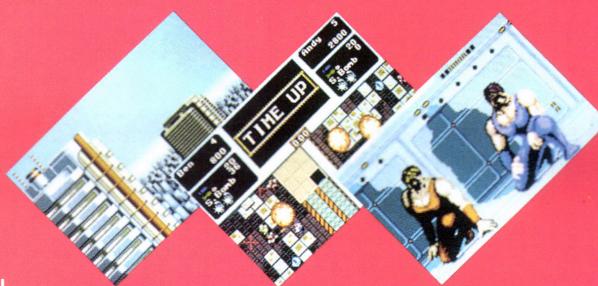
Give or take a few enemies, time delay bombs, laser cannons, and sinkholes, but who's counting. Because you'll need all your skills, good judgement, and quick reflexes to crack this game.

In Crack Down, you must accept a top-secret mission to re-take control of a heavily guarded facility where artificial life systems are created. The only problem is that their evil leader wants to use them to take over the world. And they don't appreciate well-armed, visitors, spoiling their plans.

Once inside, you'll have a limited amount of time to set off time delay bombs at key locations inside the compound and get past the patrolling guards.

If you need help, use the two-player split-screen mode. This special option allows you and a friend to blast away with your weapons as two separate teams within the facility.

So if you want a game that has an attitude, make a reservation to play Crack Down. We have just enough room to fit you in.



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**CHILL TO...**  
Psychotic, Death-Dealing Sorcerers.

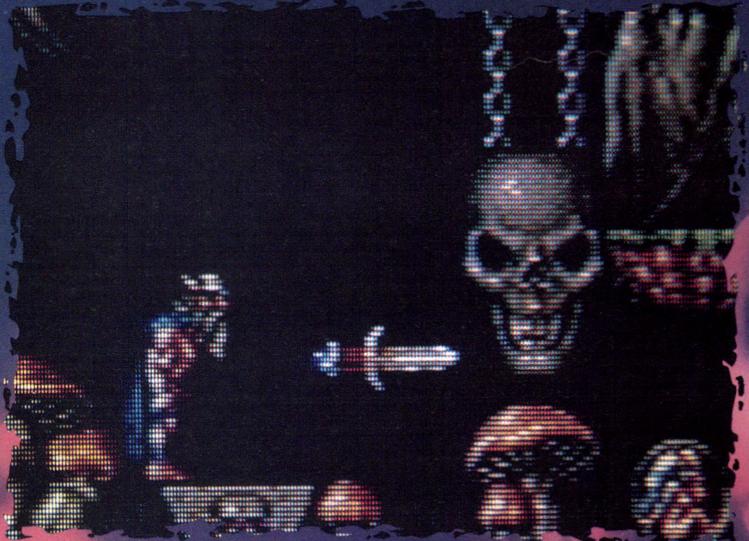
**SPILL TO...**  
Deranged, Draconian Firedogs.

**RUN LIKE HELL FROM...**

Hideous, Head-Stomping  
Hopgoblins.



"Spent hours searching for magical treasures . . . even longer trying to use them."  
—Trey Green, Game Reviewer



"Battled awesome monsters!"—Aaron Van Stavern, Game Tester

"If you liked 'Ghouls,' 'Stormlord' will blow you away!"  
—Barrett Ryals, Game Tester

**4 Megabit  
16 Bit Graphics**

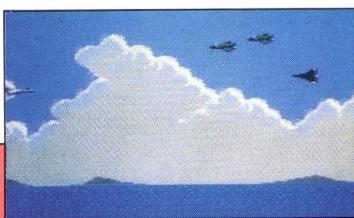
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**SEGA GENESIS**  
16-BIT CARTRIDGE

This Game Has Not Yet Been Rated.

**Tips are graded on a scale of one to five joysticks. The more joysticks that are colored in, the more valuable the hint.**

**Blow the dust off those old games, and try out some of our new hints! If you have some great hints and tips for us, just put them on a piece of paper, and send them to VG&CE, 9171 Wilshire Blvd., Suite 300, Beverly Hills, CA 90210, ATTN: Easter Egg Hunt. The author of each new tip we use will receive \$10. Write neatly and be sure to include your name and address!**



## Aerial Assault

(SEGA FOR THE SMS)



R. Stewart of Cleveland, Ohio, has found a way to get nine men and 99 bombs at any time. Simply press and hold U on Controller 2, and then press 1,2,1 on Controller 2. A "T" should appear in the upper right-hand corner of the screen. When you begin play, press Button 1 to get nine men and Button 2 to get 99 bombs. From that point, you can press either button at any time to max out the numbers.

## Burning Force

(NAMCO FOR THE GENESIS)



Andy Wu of West Lafayette, Indiana, has found a way to get ten men at the start of the game. To do so, during the title screen, press B, A, B, A, A, C, A, A, then **START**.



**Here's a key to the abbreviations:**

U = Up  
D = Down  
L = Left  
R = Right  
A = "A" button  
B = "B" button  
C = "C" button

## Dragon Spirit

(BANDAI FOR THE NES)



R. Stewart also sent in these Easter eggs for Dragon Spirit. After the first battle, during the title screen, press and hold A and B on Controller 2, and then press **START** on Controller 1. When you start, you should have 20 dragons.

AREA 1  
THE PALEOZOIC ERA  
REST 20



You can also get a sound test by pressing and holding A, B and U on Controller 2 and then pressing **RESET**. You should then see "Sound Test 00" on the screen.

SOUND TEST  
00



BOB  
**JACKIE CHAN'S ACTION KUNG FU**  
START 5  
CONTINUE 99  
TM AND © 1990 HUDSON SOFT  
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## Jackie Chan's Action Kung Fu

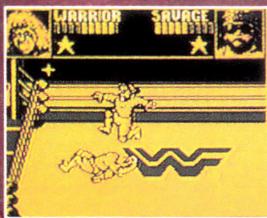
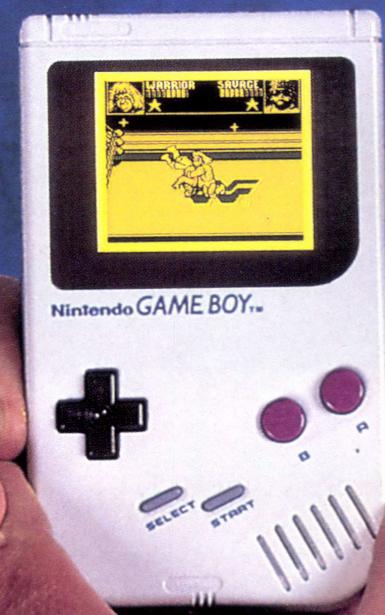
(HUDSON SOFT FOR THE NES)



Nine-year-old Jason Lund of Sioux Falls, South Dakota, wrote in to tell us of an egg he found. In the instruction booklet it tells you how to get 99 continues, but if you follow these directions, you can get a stage select as well. First, put the game into the NES, and press start repeatedly until you see Jackie Chan sitting down in the first stage. Then press **RESET**. On the title screen you should see five continues. Next, press U, U, D, D, U, D, B, A on Controller 1; on Controller 2 press B; **START** on Controller 1; and, finally, press B on Controller 2. You should now have a "1" by the word "start" and 99 continues on the screen. Press U or D to select the stage you would like to start on. Thanks for this great Easter egg, Jason.

continued on page 36

# THE ULTIMATE GAME BOY GAME.



## INCREDIBLE WRESTLING ACTION!

Take on your favorite WWF Superstars with the piledriver, suplex, dropkick and more!



## OUT-OF-THE-RING MAYHEM!

Watch out for a powerslam!



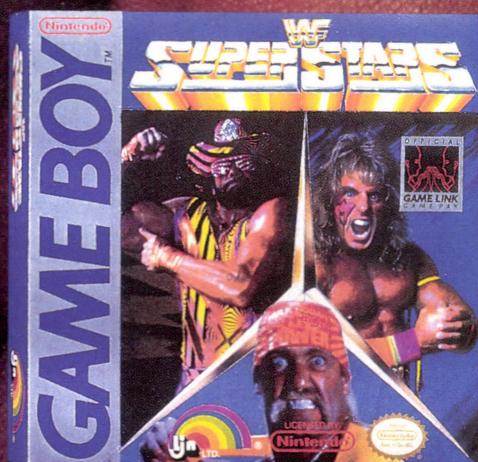
## TV INTERVIEWS:

Anybody want to take on these 24" Pythons?



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Unleash a devastating flying leap on your opponent!



Step into the ring with Ultimate Warrior™, Hulk Hogan™, Mr. Perfect™, Million Dollar Man Ted DiBiase™ and Macho King Randy Savage™!

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CIRCLE #104 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

Photo: Steve Taylor

## CONTINUE PLAY?

1

### Strider

(SEGA FOR THE GENESIS)



Lance Rice of Jasper, Alabama, has a continue for this Genesis game that isn't mentioned in the manual. Simply press the **START** button when "Game Over" appears on the screen. Thanks for the egg, Lance.

### METAL FIGHTER

(COLORDREAMS FOR THE NES)



Daniel Verboski of Cherryville, North Carolina, sent in a level select for this game. When the title screen appears, press and hold both the A and B buttons. Then press the **SELECT** button the number of times that corresponds with the number of the level you wish to play. For example, after holding both buttons, press the **SELECT** button twice for Level 2, four times for Level 4 and so on. Thanks, Daniel.



PUSH RUN TO CONTINUE

1

CREDIT 94

### Legendary Axe 2

(NEC FOR THE TG-16)



To get 99 continues, when your last man dies (and "Game Over" is on the screen), press and hold Button 2 and **RUN**, then press L repeatedly. The quicker you are, the more continues you will receive, up to a maximum of 99.

## Adventure Island II

(HUDSON SOFT FOR THE NES)



To select any of the eight islands to start on, first reset the game, then, during the title screen, press R, L, R, L, A, B, A, B.



### Gauntlet 2

(MINDSCAPE FOR THE NES)



If you get stuck or enter a level that has fake exits, you can stand still—careful, don't shoot or move—and all the walls will become exits. This takes approximately 150 points of health to do. In other words, if you stand still waiting for the exits with 2,000 points of health, they will appear at 1850. Finally, if you have run out of keys, you can stand still for about a count of 100 and all the doors will open.



### Hard Drivin'

(TENGEN FOR THE GENESIS)



Tony Hsu of Roswell, Georgia, found a way to drive the practice race with other cars on the track. Play a game normally but intentionally lose. Then go to the option screen and select Practice Mode. There should now be other cars on the track. Thanks, Tony.

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between Dirk the Daring  
and Princess Daphne!

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CLASSIC DRAGON'S LAIR® on nes™ and GAME BOY.  
take up your sword and save the beloved  
Daphne from the evil clutches of the fire-  
breathing dragon.



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CIRCLE #115 ON READER SERVICE CARD.

## Low G Man (TAXAN FOR THE NES)



Phil Gartman of Sheboygan, Wisconsin, was the first person to send in the location of a special warp that can be found in Chapter 1, Scene 2. To find the warp, you must first get to the Walker, freeze it and kill the driver to get in. Then move a few steps to the left and use the Walker's special jump. You'll reach the top of the screen, at which time you should see a ledge. You'll find the door to the warp on this ledge.



Phil also included the password for Chapter 5, Scene 1. Type in BILL to reach the next-to-last scene in the last chapter. Thanks to Phil for these eggs.



4 Joystick

Jason Hilton of Eagan, Minnesota, also sent in codes for Low G Man, for Chapters 2, 3 and 4.

For Chapter 2, type in MICH; for Chapter 3, type in ELLE; and for Chapter 4, type in ISAC. Thanks for the passwords, Jason.

## John Madden Football (ELECTRONIC ARTS FOR THE GENESIS)



Keith Allman of Moorpark, California, has sent in not one but ten different codes for the Super Bowl. Thanks for all the codes, Keith:

Minnesota vs. Denver : 3456712

Philadelphia vs. Miami : 7676767

Chicago vs. New England :

5555555

Atlanta vs. Miami : 7777777

Los Angeles vs. Houston : 7654321

San Francisco vs. Miami :

7651567

Philadelphia vs. Houston :

1777777

San Francisco vs. New England :

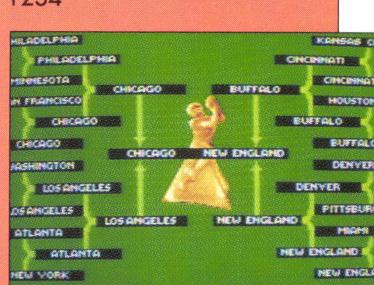
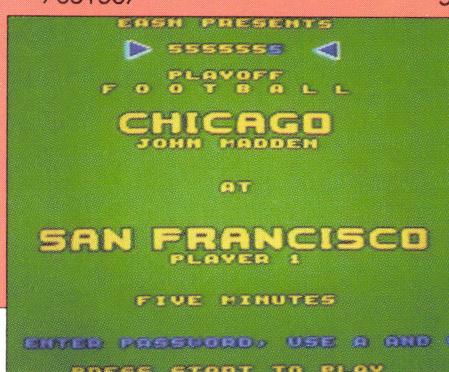
1717171

Philadelphia vs. New England :

6712345

San Francisco vs. Pittsburgh :

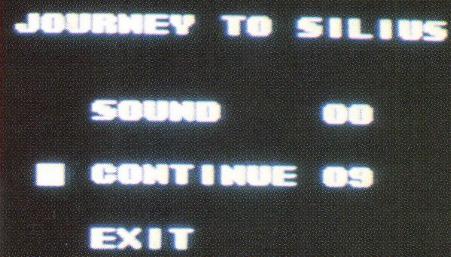
5671234



## Journey to Silius (SUNSOFT FOR THE NES)



To get nine continues and a sound test, during the title screen, press the B button 33 times and then press **START**.

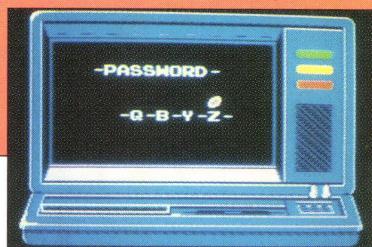


## Mission: Impossible (ULTRA FOR THE NES)



Jeremy Pettit of Little Falls, Minnesota, was nice enough to pass on some codes for this game. For Area 2, type in HMPR; for Area 3, type in KMWV; for Area 4, input XDGJ; for Area 5, type in TVJL; and for Area 6, the code is QBYZ.

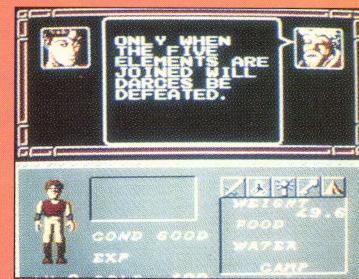
Thanks,  
Jeremy.



## Dungeon Magic (TAITO FOR THE NES)



Peter Perez, of Raymondville, Texas, wrote in to tell us how to start off this game with 100 coins. Simply watch the storyline of the game until you see the town in the lower-left portion of the screen. Press B on Controller 2 twice then **START** on Controller 1. When the game begins, you should see that you now have 100 coins. Thanks, Peter.



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GENESIS™

16-BIT CARTRIDGE

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war simulation game!*



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If you're still playing with Game Boy®, it's time to grow up. Game Gear is here. The new color portable video game system with arcade quality Sega™ games and graphics. Game Gear's advanced technology makes Game Boy look like child's play. The high resolution color screen provides razor sharp detail. Intense colors give a picture so lifelike it puts you right in the thick of the action. And the back-lit screen allows you to play in any kind of light, even total darkness. Other features include multi-channel stereo sound and state-



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Rechargeable Battery Pack for hours of play without batteries. So quit kidding yourself, it's time to get into gear.

.....

## GAME GEAR™

COLOR PORTABLE **SEGA** GAME SYSTEM

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# VIDEO GAMES

## REVIEW

### Battletoads

TRADEWEST

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Are you one of the growing numbers of VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT readers who have sold their NES consoles in order to help finance the purchase of a Genesis, TurboGrafx-16 or even (gasp) a Neo-Geo? Are you proud of the fact that you gave up Mario in favor of Keith Courage or Michael Jackson? Well, I hope you're enjoying that shiny new 16-bitter, because when you get a look at *Battletoads*, you might regret it.

It's pretty obvious that the 'toads are a *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* spoof, right down to their skin color, but these guys don't mess around with any fancy ninja weaponry; their hands and feet are just as effective as a "sai" or a "bo" (or a battering ram, or an anvil—I'll explain later). Their leader is not a soft-spoken rodent, like the Turtles follow; the toads' efforts are coordinated by a tough-talking old buzzard known as Professor T. Bird. Lastly, where the heroes-in-a-half-shell have assumed the monikers of Renaissance painters, each of the three Battletoads is named after a skin condition: Pimple, Zitz and Rash.

As explained in the game's introductory sequence, Pimple and Princess Angelica have been captured by the incredibly evil (and incredibly curvaceous) Dark Queen. Your job is to rescue your fellow Battletoad and "the best-looking girl this side of the Mazillion Star Cluster." But in order to do this, you have to get past the scuzzy varmints who make up the Queen's alien army: the Psyko-Pigs, the Saturn Toadtraps and bigger beasts like Robo-Manus and Big Blag.

There's a two-player cooperative mode that proves to be more humorous than helpful; you'll spend a lot of time apologizing to your partner for inadvertently clob-

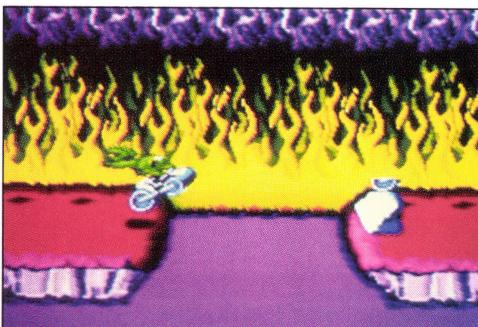
bering him or her with a "toad chop" or a "three-finger jab."

These specialty moves are one of the main reasons why *Battletoads* is so much fun. At different points in the game, the controller buttons are automatically reconfigured to set you up with different methods of attack. In other words, the button that allows you to deliver a "jawbuster" to the tall walker in Area 1 is the same button that administers a "big bad boot" to the giblets in Area 3. There's no need to memorize a whole menu of complicated control-pad functions—just press "B" and watch your enemies fly!

The animation that depicts each of these actions is absolutely hilarious; during the "anvil slam," for example, your toad's fist actually takes the shape of a giant anvil. And when you use the "full metal earmuffs" attack, his hands transform into a huge pair of cymbals that crash together—with your opponent's head between them.

The whole game is loaded with stunning features; some, like the multiplane scrolling effects, are rarely seen on the NES. Others are completely new to this type of game. The Area 1 boss is a perfect example of the uniqueness that *Battletoads* seems to take for granted. When you reach the end of that level, your toad's eyes bulge out in terror as he sees the boss character, and his jaw literally drops

to the ground; yet another clever bit of cartoonish animation. But as a giant leg steps into the screen from the right, the screen's perspective changes to a first-person view *from the eyes of the boss*, and you watch as your toad picks up boulders and flings them at you, the boss. Incredibly, the boss character is never shown on the screen.



This type of variety is typical of the rest of the game. During the 12 levels that make up the *Battletoads* experience, you'll do everything from swinging on a rope to riding on a super-fast air car. The only thing that keeps the graphics from rating a perfect 10 is the "flickering" that appears in some areas; it's most noticeable in the two-player mode. The sound effects are worth mentioning, though: I love the weighty "thump" that accompanies some of the more powerful punches, and the snapping sounds of the Saturn Toadtraps couldn't be better.

*Battletoads* has it all: charismatic characters, gorgeous graphics, innovative play options, a perfectly balanced difficulty level and a wonderfully inane sense of humor. There's no doubt in my mind that this is going to be the biggest NES game of 1991.

—Chris Bieniek

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## James Pond

ELECTRONIC ARTS

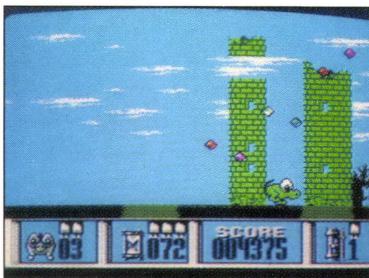
For the Sega Genesis (\$49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

He doesn't look like Sean Connery, Roger Moore or Timothy Dalton. Beautiful women don't throw themselves at his feet. (He doesn't even have feet.) He doesn't drive fancy cars, and he doesn't have a license to kill. Nonetheless, James Pond is a secret agent extraordinaire. He's also a fish.

In this arcade-style underwater spy romp, you get to control James Pond as he struggles to complete a dozen dangerous missions, each demanding quick thinking and fast reactions. The missions, whose names are reminiscent of another famous spy's adventures, have Pond swimming through peril-ridden caverns, sunken shipwrecks and secret chambers while avoiding all types of undersea villains, including oysters, squids, jellyfish, pelicans, killer fish and more.

Of course, being a top-notch secret agent, James Pond has a way to deal with all those villains. When the bad guys



**James Pond, by Electronic Arts, is an entertaining underwater spy caper with arcade-style action.**

attack, Pond can defend himself with his special underwater gun, which encases an assailant in a tough bubble. Popping the bubble will not only destroy the villain, but also may reward Pond with a bonus item or power-up. If Pond doesn't pop the bubble in time, the enemy is released.

In lieu of his bubble gun, James Pond can select a defense from an oceanful of special items. Some items reward Pond only with bonus points, while others supply our marine operative with additional powers. Fairy wands, for example, make James Pond temporarily invincible, while potion bottles destroy all enemies on the screen. In addition, clocks give Pond extra time in which to complete his current mission, and hearts give him extra lives.

While he is scurrying to grab power-ups, James Pond must avoid the many dangerous objects mixed in with the goodies on the ocean floor. These include whiskey bottles that make Pond drunk, glue pots that stick him to the seabed, skull potions that turn enemies doubly mean and bombs that explode shortly after being touched.

In each mission, Pond will stumble upon hidden rooms. These rooms may be good, bad or neutral. Good rooms contain special items, bad rooms contain enemies and neutral rooms contain a combination

of both. Frequently Pond will discover starfish in a secret room. Depending on their color, starfish give Pond super speed, maximum energy or extra bubble power. The dark starfish, the only one that deep-sea agents should avoid, sticks to Pond and hampers his movement.

Each of the twelve missions has a different objective. In "licence to bubble" you must help Pond find keys that will release six lobsters from their traps. In "the fish with the golden bar," Pond must recover eight gold bars lost in a shipwreck. Other adventures include "a view to a spill," in which Pond must destroy a leaking oil platform; "for your fins only," which has our hero recovering toxic waste containers; "leak and let die," wherein Pond must find sponges and use them to plug holes in two leaking oil tankers; and "moneyraker," which drops Pond into the lost city of Atlantis to locate priceless vases. Other levels are "from three-mile island with love," "fishfingers," "they only live once," "orchids are forever," "the mermaid who loved me" and "Dr. Maybe."

*James Pond* is an entertaining and challenging underwater spy caper that should please just about anyone. Its scenarios are

fresh, the graphics crisp and colorful and the game play addicting. If you're going to take on the persona of a fish, it might as well be "Pond. James Pond."

—Clayton Walnum

Electronic Arts  
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San Mateo, CA 94404  
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## Castelian

TRIFFIX

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$42.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

*Castelian* is yet another game that may be familiar to those of you that have a computer as well as an NES. The name *Tower Toppler* may be more recognizable, that's how it has appeared on the Atari ST, Amiga and possibly other systems as well. If you have seen *Tower Toppler* before, there are a few differences between it and *Castelian*; if you haven't seen it, then listen up gamers!

*Castelian* and two suns both revolve around a planet known as Centrus, where summer lasts the whole year. Our friend Julius on the island nation of Jammerville has been awakened to learn that seven alien towers have surrounded the island, cutting off the export of Jammerville's chief products: centruribes, diamonds and sapphires.

If one more tower appears, the island will be completely enclosed, and everyone will be trapped. Our friend Julius has been charged with the task of toppling these alien towers to save the island from being cut off.

To take out each tower, Julius must make his way around the ramparts, along ledges that are protruding from the outer walls. Along the way, lifts and passageways that pass into and directly back out of the tower must be navigated in the quest to reach the top. Only when the top has been reached safely can Julius proceed to topple the tower.

There is more to this job than climbing however. Some of the steps are set up so that gravity will pull him down to the bottom if he doesn't keep moving. Other steps are weak and may crumble, plunging Julius to the level below—if there is

one! If there is, Julius may simply climb back up, though the time lost may prove critical. If there isn't a ledge below...well, our friend can't swim and will perish if he hits the water below each tower.

Some areas have gaps in the pathways where Julius must jump and hope for the best. Sometimes there are obstacles blocking the way; however, Julius has brought along his carbonobombs, which can be used to blast his pathway clear of some, though not all of them. Unfortunately, there are several alien critters that populate the pathways; some of which may be destroyed or possibly stunned, while others will pay no heed at all to the carbonobombs lobbed their way.

Time is a big factor. Julius has a set limit for reaching the tower's peak and detonating his Destructo Bomb. If the time runs out, Julius goes bye-bye. He begins the game with three lives, with extras awarded depending upon which of the two possible difficulty levels are in effect.



In the novice skill level, extra lives are awarded at every 5,000



points, but in the expert level it's double that. Also, though the time counter reads the same, the timer and aliens both move a bit quicker.

After a tower has been knocked to the ground, Julius gets to take a small break in the bonus round. Here, he travels along a pathway, gathering as many jewels as possible while avoiding pitfalls or the occasional alien that swings by. If Julius makes it to a clock tower, he can collect bonus points for the jewels collected. If not, it's off to the next tower and better luck next time!

While there is certainly a little bit of action involved, *Castelian* really depends more upon puzzle-solving ability and good coordination for success. Each tower has its own little tricks and strategies to be



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### TOTALLY RAD IS TOTALLY RAD!



Excellent! Dude meets magician.



Bogus! Dude meets monster.



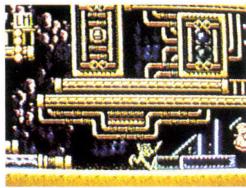
Take to the air, dude!



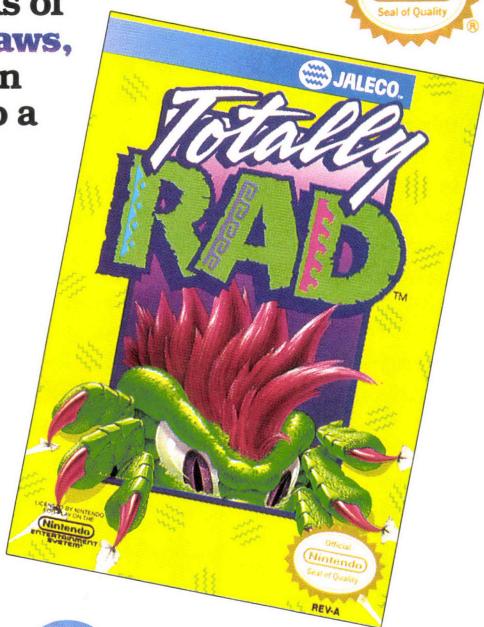
Whoah! Life's a beach.



Awesome! Dude goes underground.



Tubular! Totally weird war.



JALECO™

mastered before the tower can fall. Once the tricks are known, it's a game of beating the clock. Either one or two players may participate. Continues are limited, so don't expect to just push your way through the towers; finesse will prove more rewarding.

Visually, mediocre is a fair term, as there isn't anything flashy about the land of Jammerville. I personally couldn't really get into this game, though I did play halfway through it to try and be fair about it. Sound effects are very limited: other than the opening music, there isn't much there. If you are familiar with *Tower Toppler* and you liked it, *Castelian* is a faithful reproduction with an addition of bonus rounds to give it some freshness. Give it a try before making any investments.

—Brent Walker

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Quebec, Canada H4P 1K5  
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## Whomp 'Em

JALECO

For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$45.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

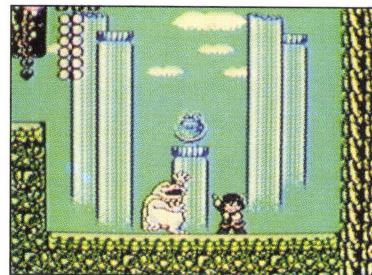
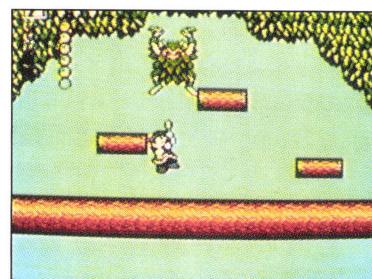
"Wampum" is a slang term for money; it originally referred to the strings of beads used by North American Indians for trade and for decoration. *Whomp 'Em*, as defined by Jaleco, has nothing to do with currency; this is a game about hitting things with a stick.

Well, that's not entirely true. As an Indian brave named Soaring Eagle, your purpose in life is to collect "totems" for your magic pouch. In order to find these items, you must run around and "whomp" a lot of bad guys with your spear. In its basic form, the spear acts as sort of a spring-loaded, retractable cattle prod. However, when you find a totem, you can use its power to alter the way the spear is used. You can spin the tip like a buzzsaw, shoot a freeze ray, even trap your enemies in a web. There are seven totems in all, including the mysterious "unknown" totem, and each

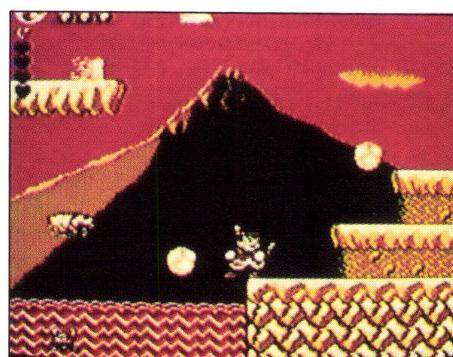
one has a different effect.

It seems a bit odd that the instruction manual doesn't spell out a more specific reason why Soaring Eagle has to go through so much trouble, especially because the game's introduction screens allude to a huge, ominous figure lurking in the shadows. As it's described, *Whomp 'Em* lets you whack your enemies for the sole purpose of learning new and exciting ways to...well, whack your enemies. If nothing else, I was expecting a token background story about a kidnapped squaw or something.

All kidding aside, this one's another *Mario*-style "guy game," one that takes you through eight levels of action that scroll in all directions. There are plenty of strange, unfriendly beasties to plow through as you go along; my favorites are the spear-wielding, mop-topped green pygmies and the golden robot knights. Again, the documentation gives you no information about who your enemies are and why they attack you on sight; they are simply referred to en masse as "creatures." I realize that many players never read the instructions anyway, but a lot of video-game information is disseminated by word-of-mouth, and it's tough to spread the word about a hot new title



**Whomp 'Em's features are very much like the play mechanics in Capcom's *MegaMan* series.**



when all of the game's elements must be referred to as "that green guy" or "the little, orange striped thing."

Another small gripe concerns the "deerskin shirt" and "buffalo headdress" power-ups. These items increase Soaring Eagle's defensive power and grant him temporary invincibility; it would have been nice to see the little guy actually wear them. Instead, the screen displays icons in the corner of the screen to show that they're in use.

Though the influence is not immediately obvious, *Whomp 'Em* has a lot in common with Capcom's popular *MegaMan* series. After the first level is completed, a circular map screen lets you pick the next "world"; you can play through Levels 2-6 in any order you choose. Each level ends with a boss character who gives up one of the aforementioned totems when defeated, which essentially equips you with a new type of weapon. These and other features are very much like the play mechanics of the *MegaMan* titles, right down to the ladder-climbing and platform-jumping.

It's easy to criticize games like *Whomp 'Em* on the basis of originality; I'll be the first to admit that this one is not exactly the next *Tetris*. But there's a lot to be said for a product that's well-produced. The graphics are clean and colorful, the play control is flawless and immediately accessible, and it's addicting enough to keep me going until all my "continues" are used up. For these reasons, I have to recommend *Whomp 'Em*

—C. B.

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Northbrook, IL 60062  
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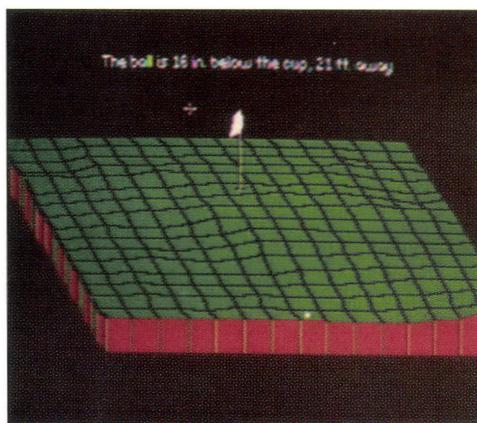
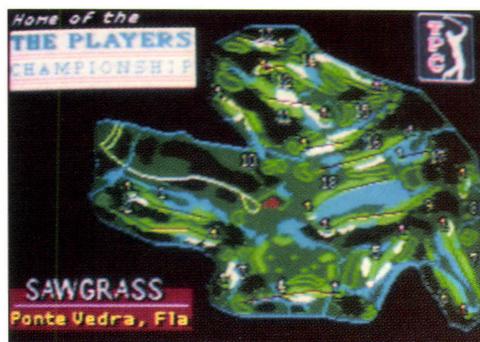
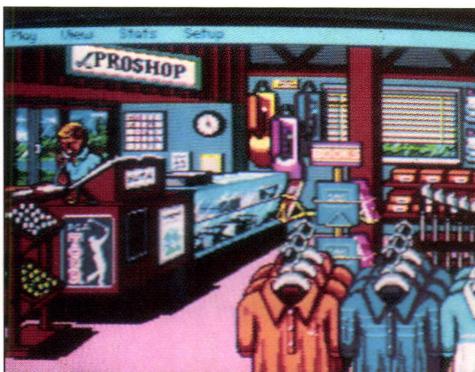
## PGA Tour Golf

ELECTRONIC ARTS

For the Sega Genesis (\$59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Electronic Arts has taken a leadership role among third-party Genesis developers. They've converted several of their top computer titles to Genesis carts, including *Zany Golf*, *Populous*, *Budokan*, *Lakers Vs. Celtics* and others. Now they've done the



**Electronic Arts' PGA Tour Golf is a thoroughly entertaining, challenging and complex golf simulation.**

same to their *PGA Tour Golf*, and it's impressive in its faithfulness to the computer version.

Although not as graphically elaborate as Sega's own *Arnold Palmer Tournament Golf*, the other golf simulation for Genesis, *PGA Tour Golf* plays an impressive game and has enough views and options to satisfy any armchair duffer. The ball dynamics are as good as they get, the tournament mode is handled realistically, even the music and sound effects are enjoyable.

The courses, all four of them, are represented in 3-D filled polygon-style graphics enhanced with bitmapped trees. For the most part, the surface seems completely flat, until you get to the putting green, which can be displayed as a rotatable isometric cross section to give you a better idea of what sort of terrain you're up against. Sometimes the green didn't seem to react in the way the isometric view would lead you to believe it would.

There are practice and tournament modes, a driving range and a putting green, and you can have from one to four players in your party (with any combination of computer and human opponents). When in tournament mode, your standings are reported after every hole, and the announcer will often interrupt when somebody in another foursome has scored an unusual shot that results in a change in the standings. Tournaments and players can be saved in progress with the battery back-up and restored later on.

Each hole begins with a piece of advice from one of the real PGA players (like "Be accurate and don't drive into a trap"). Then you "fly by" the hole, a dramatic camera view that begins at the pin, swings back and around to reveal the green, then trucks up the fairway backward to the tee. The object is to familiarize you with the landscape of the hole. Unfortunately, the Genesis doesn't seem quite up to the effect—it's better in the computer version, and the fly-by is too choppy for a decent effect. Fortunately, the overhead view and the pop-up window displaying the lie of the ball are sufficient tools to plan your shot, and you can get those views any time you want from the pull-down menus at the top of the screen.

Speaking of pull-down menus, there are dozens of them in this game, and they are all easy both to negotiate and use.

However, they do make use of a lot of very small lettering, small enough to give you a headache after prolonged playing.

The mechanics of hitting the ball are similar to those in *Arnold Palmer*; they're based on a power/accuracy meter. You have to hit the "B" button three times to make a shot: once to start the meter, once when the swing has reached your chosen power percentage and once more to control the accuracy (hook, slice or dead on). Instant replays are always available; sometimes they pop up automatically after exceptional shots.

The computer plays a good game, but this is one of those that really shines when you play with one, two or three other people. If the graphics, which would seem to be no more than 32 colors, were on a level with *Arnold Palmer Tournament Golf* (or even the celebrated *Links* 256-color golf game from Access), it'd be a truly remarkable achievement. As it is, *PGA Tour Golf* is still a thoroughly entertaining, challenging and complex golf simulation.

—Joshua Mandel

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## S.C.A.T.

NATSUME

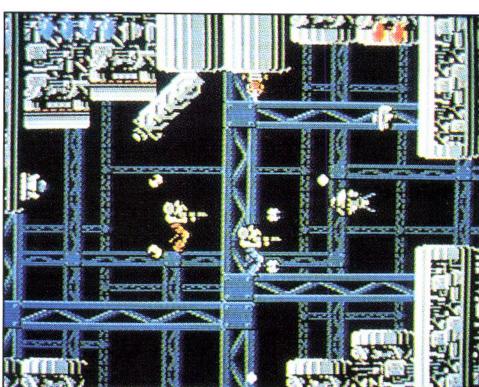
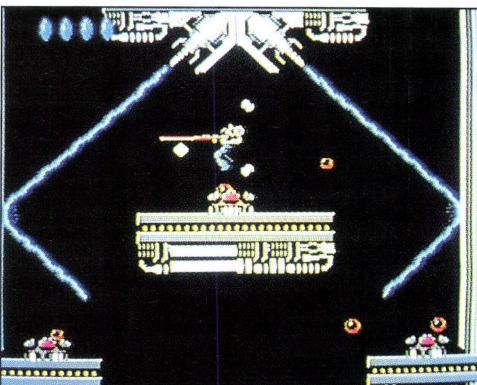
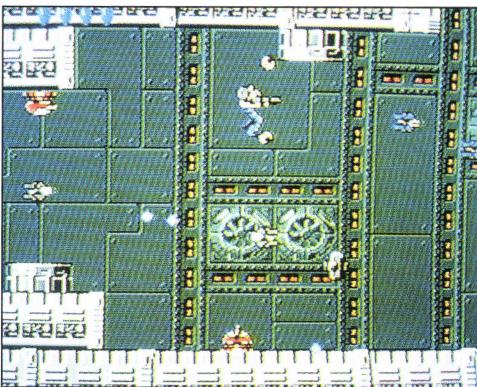
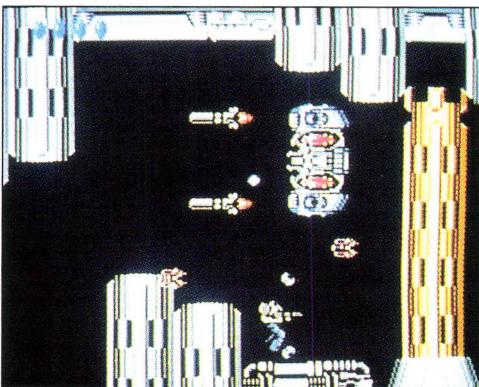
For the Nintendo Entertainment System (\$47.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

When I hear the word "scat," I think of shooting a dog out of my yard, not of a video game about half-human, half-robotic warriors defending 21st-century Earth. In this case, however, S.C.A.T. stands for the "Special Cybernetic Attack Team," whose job it is to repulse an alien horde from the skies above Earth. Supreme Commander Vile Malmort has parked his space station above the blasted remains of New York City and has troops scouring the area to crush any resistance.

Fortunately, the president was forewarned of the attack and has gathered the most knowledgeable scientists from around the globe,

**As a half-human, half-robotic warrior in Natsume's S.C.A.T., the player must repulse an invading alien horde.**



setting them to work finding a defense against the invaders. From their labs came an answer: the Special Cybernetic Attack Team, made up of part-human, part-mechanical warriors. Although somewhat small in size, they are very powerful. The S.C.A.T. is able to take advantage of the invaders' advanced technology by capturing and using their weapons against them.

There are five parts in the plan to repulse the invaders. The first task at hand is to clean up the skies around the ruined city. Then, the S.C.A.T. warriors must make their way into the lower depths within and below the city, where Malmort's drones are destroying the very foundations of the city in an attempt to ease their invasion efforts.

After cleaning the drones out from every last crevice below ground, the true mission begins. S.C.A.T. forces must travel up toward the mothership through an "Astrotube," the lifeline between the ground forces and the ships orbiting above. Success in this area involves both successfully defeating any drones in transit from the ship above, as well as avoiding defensive measures intent upon your destruction. Large falling pieces of twisted space junk will also rain downward and are just as deadly if you collide with them.

The top of the Astrotube is guarded by a huge starship bristling with weaponry. Laser cannons, missiles and even more drones cooperatively defend the ship against any attack.

If the starship is defeated, it's time to take on the big guy himself—Vile Malmort. His orbiting platform is heavily defended by indestructible laser emplacements and even more drones. Knock this guy out and, hey, not only have you saved Earth, you've earned a well-deserved vacation (if the former isn't reason enough!).

As a participant in this mission, you have two S.C.A.T. members to choose from. In a one-player game, either Arnold or Sigourney (no comment) may be chosen. There aren't any differences in ability between the two, just different names and different colored suits. In a two-player mission, both S.C.A.T. members are active.

Each player has a stock weapon that they start with and the ability to use three other weapons that may be taken from the invaders' supplies. Laser, bomb and wide-beam weapons are scattered all along the

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MATT GROENING

Hello, fellow humans!  
Bartholomew J. Simpson  
here, with a big secret:

**Space mutants are invading Springfield!**

Yours truly is the only one who can see 'em—so it's up to me to stop 'em. I've gotta spraypaint things, get radical on my skateboard, and in general behave like a nuisance, man. It's a good thing I've got the rest of the Simpsons to help me out.

So if you're a decent person, a patriot, save the Earth! *Buy this game!*



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battleground in special capsules. When shot open, the capsules reveal either one of the aforementioned three weapons, special speed-up pods or an energy-recovery module that restores some of your character's life force.

Both characters are also equipped with dual satellite weapons that shift from front to rear, and discharge whenever the main weapon is fired. These weapons may be frozen in a position as well, to concentrate maximum firepower in a single direction when needed.

Players start with six units of lifeforce, with one unit removed every time damage is incurred. Bonus units are awarded at certain scoring intervals, as well as by picking up the appropriate energy pods mentioned before.

S.C.A.T. obviously has some familiar features about it, but is nonetheless a well-crafted and enjoyable game. The graphics are interesting, with variable scrolling and little flicker. The soundtrack is equally good throughout—explosions, music and all. Unlimited continues are available that, when used, start you at the beginning of the round, but the game shouldn't be particularly difficult for the average player. All in all, it's a fun game that should be given a look.

—B. W.

Natsume Inc.  
1234A Howard Ave.  
Burlingame, CA 94010  
(415) 342-1712

## Dick Tracy

SEGA

For the Sega Genesis (\$49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

It's more than just a game, it's a piece of history. Over 50 years ago, little boys ran around playing Dick Tracy on their



Sega's *Dick Tracy* might disappoint comic strip fans, since the video game is based on the movie.

front steps, flashing their official Dick Tracy wrist radios and pretending to shoot up Flattop, Itchy and other creepy, grotesque characters. Now the little boys have become fathers and grandfathers, and the front steps have been replaced by the TV screen.

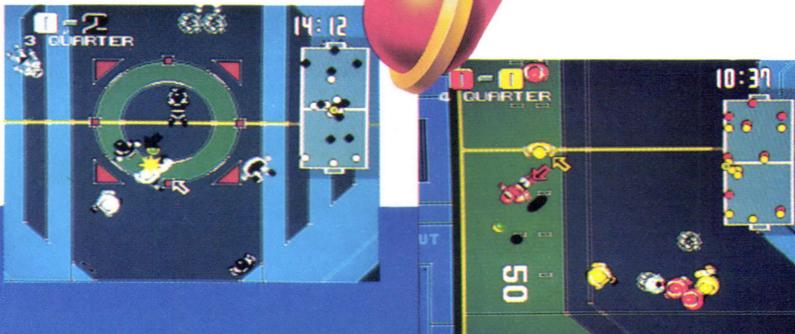
Sounds charming, doesn't it? But hold everything, this is not the Dick Tracy of 1931. It's not even the Dick Tracy of 1990's comic strips. In fact, Chester Gould might not recognize his square-jawed flatfoot at all.

Why? Because this game is not based on the comic strip, it's based on the movie. It's so far removed from the genuine item that those who remember the real Tracy will be shocked at how bland, violent and unimaginative he's become—not to mention the fact that he now looks like Warren Beatty. Even fans of the film version may be disappointed, since the villains in the game are nothing like the larger-than-life weirdos of the film version.

The name of this episode is "a dynamite case." Big Boy is the mastermind

continued on page 108

# POWERBALL™



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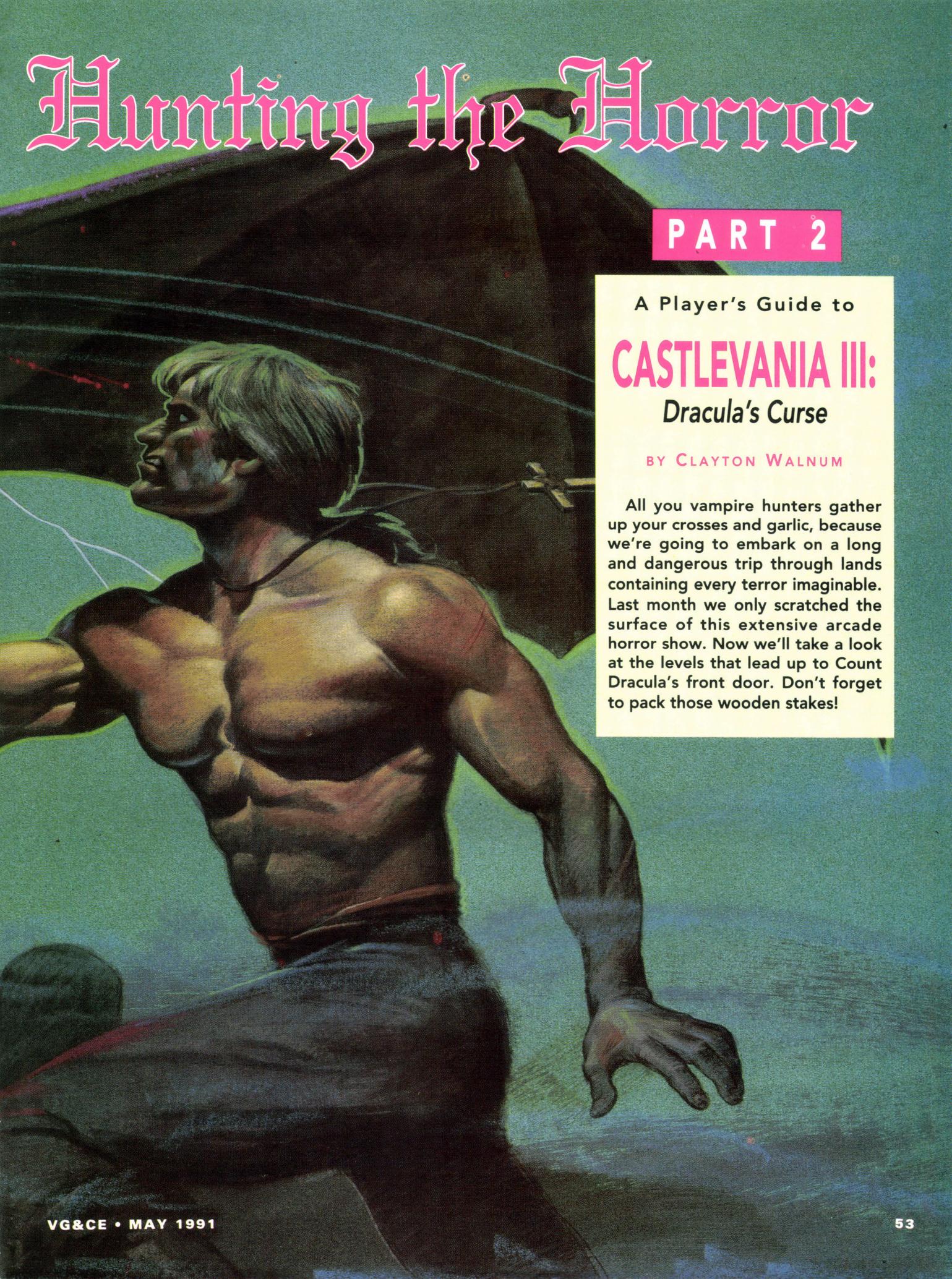


**namco**

The Game Creator



# Hunting the Horror



## PART 2

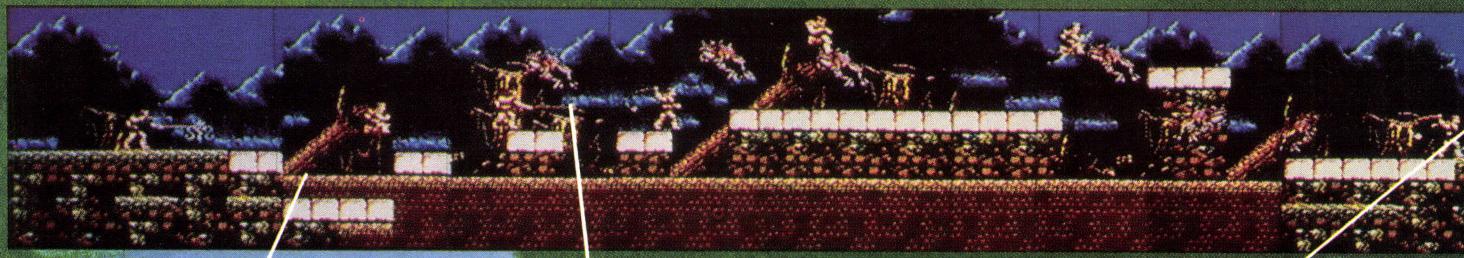
A Player's Guide to

### CASTLEVANIA III: Dracula's Curse

BY CLAYTON WALNUM

All you vampire hunters gather up your crosses and garlic, because we're going to embark on a long and dangerous trip through lands containing every terror imaginable. Last month we only scratched the surface of this extensive arcade horror show. Now we'll take a look at the levels that lead up to Count Dracula's front door. Don't forget to pack those wooden stakes!

## AREA 5, STRIP 1



If you fall into the mud, keep hopping. You don't want to sink too deep!

Each time you jump to the next platform, get ready to whip a giant frog. You can usually keep your footing using this method, but sometimes the frogs surprise you.

You can get a dagger here.

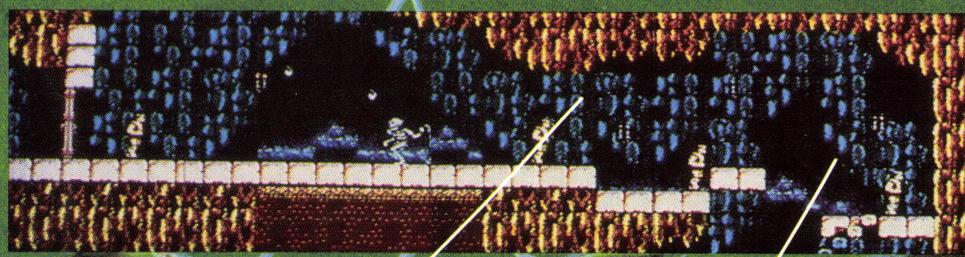
## AREA 5, STRIP 3



Use the gliding platform to ride over the mud. Watch out for the bats.

Grab an axe here.

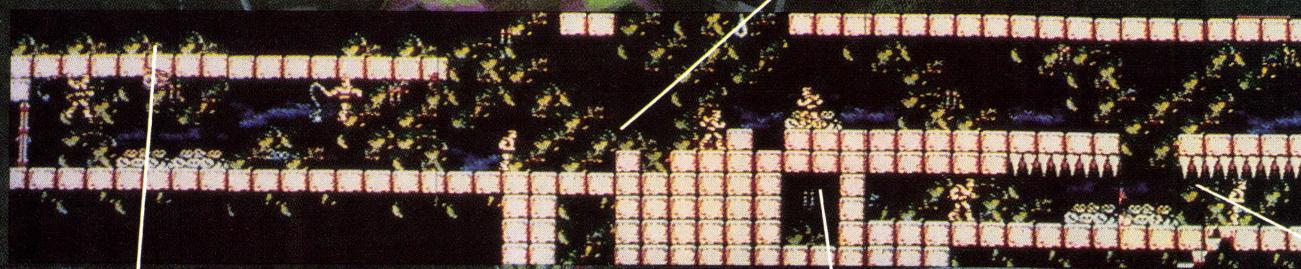
## AREA 5, STRIP 4



Get a boomerang in this candle.

These stairs lead down to Area 5, Strip 5.

## AREA 6, STRIP 1

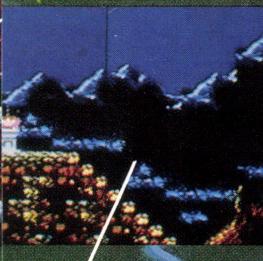


Jump up and whip the flying eyes before they get a chance to drop fire on you.

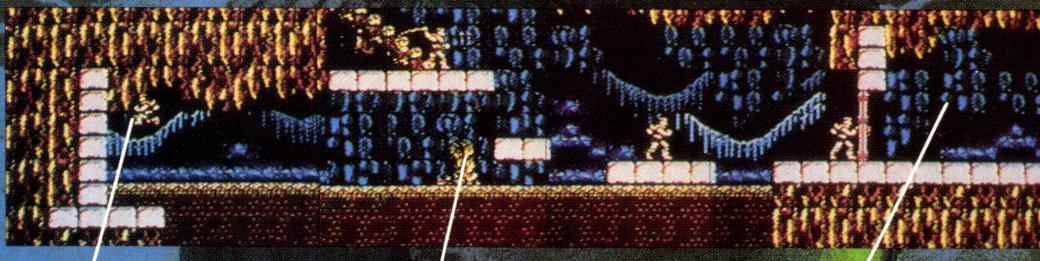
The acid drops here will dissolve blocks. They'll also harm you, so stay out of their way.

Wait for the acid drips to eat their way down to this candle. You can get a boomerang here. In addition, there's a piece of meat in one of the blocks.

## AREA 5, STRIP 2



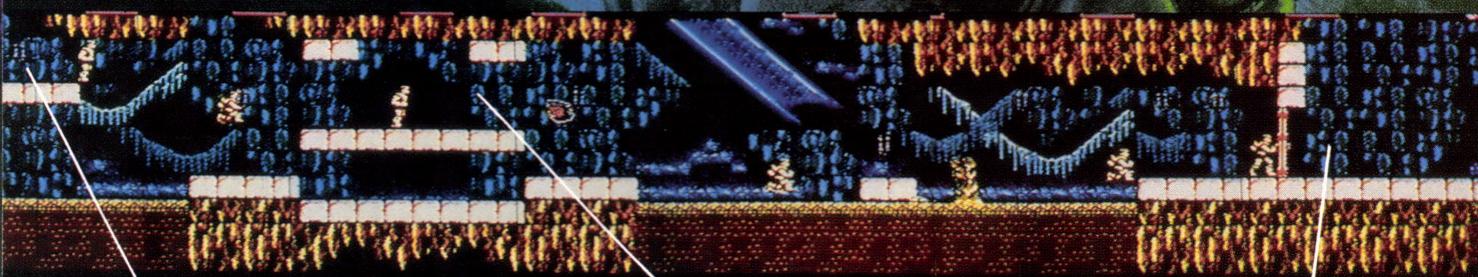
These stairs lead down to Area 5, Strip 2.



Whip these blocks to find strength-restoring meat.

Along with the giant frogs, you must battle mudmen here. Keep whipping.

Take this door to Area 5, Strip 3.

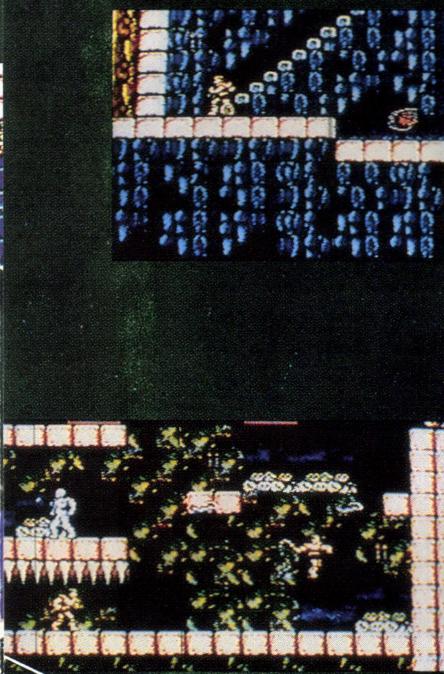


One of these candles holds a cross that will blast everything on the screen.

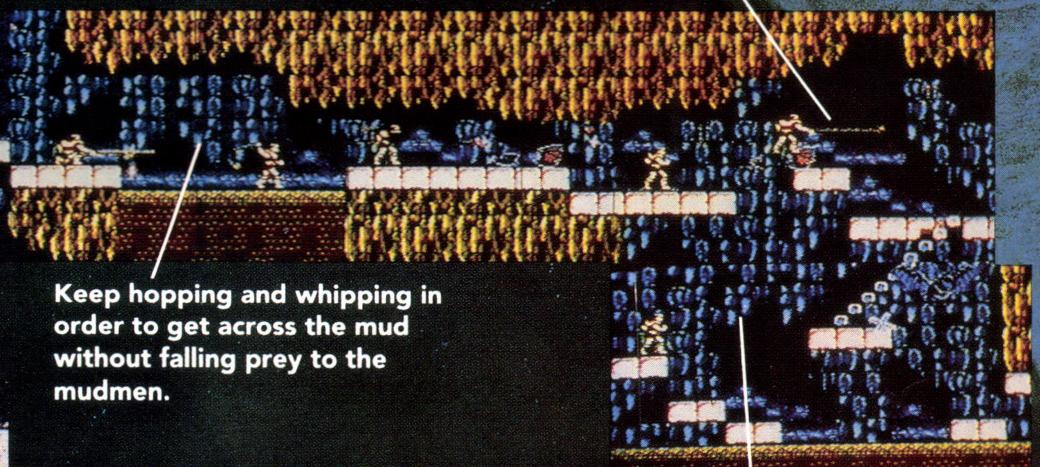
Look for holy water in this candle.

This door leads to Area 5, Strip 4.

## AREA 5, STRIP 5

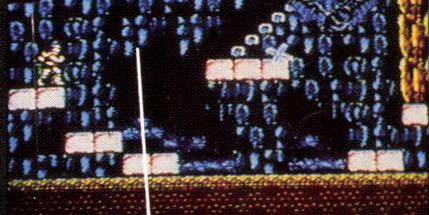


These stairs lead down to Area 6, Strip 2.



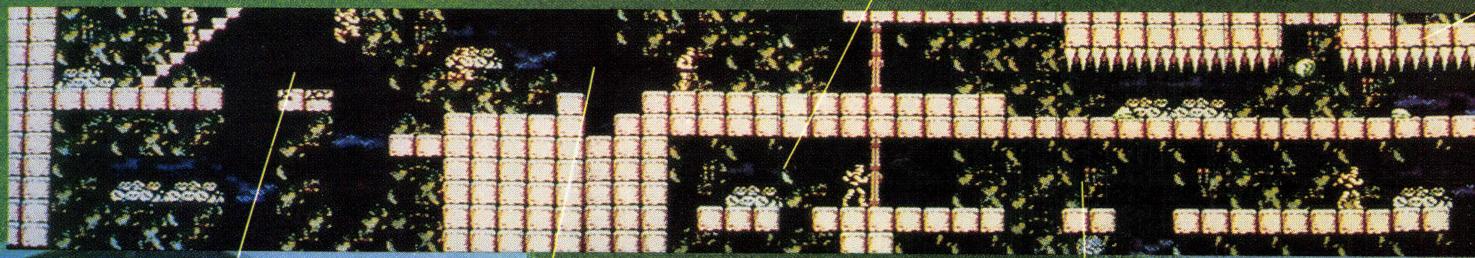
Keep hopping and whipping in order to get across the mud without falling prey to the mudmen.

Don't let the bats knock you from this platform. If you fall, you're a goner.



Here, you'll meet the boss creature of Area 5, a giant bat. Stand all the way to the left and throw your boomerang. When the boomerang is in the air, keep using your whip. The giant bat divides into smaller bats when it gets hit, so stay on your toes.

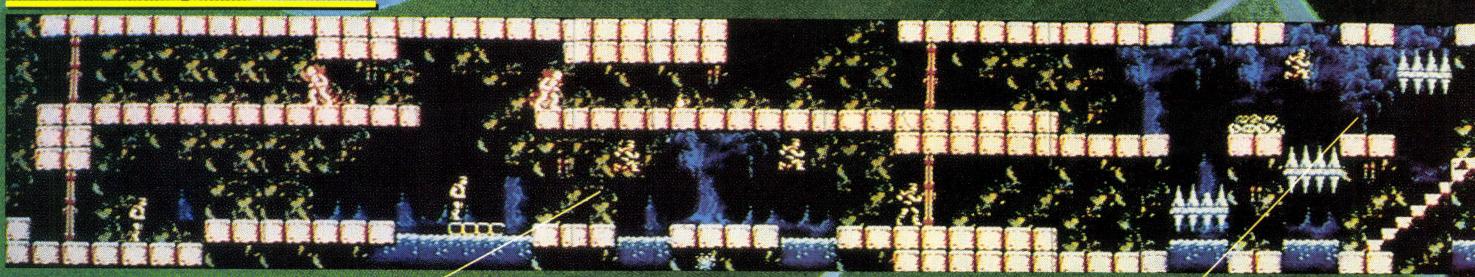
## AREA 6, STRIP 2



These crumbling blocks can support you for only a couple of seconds.

If you took our advice and waited until you could take the lower path, you'll find a 1-Up here.

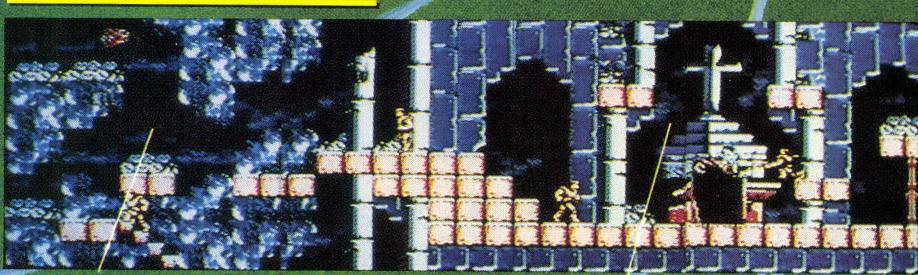
## AREA 6, STRIP 3



If you're a good jumper, you'll have no trouble getting past this area.

The energy balls that patrol these platforms can knock you to your death. Plan your jumps carefully.

## AREA 6, STRIP 4

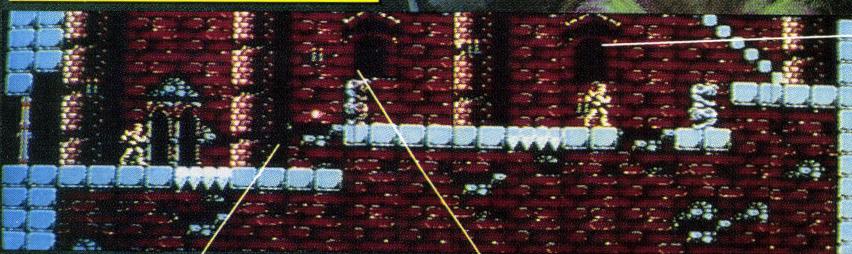


Wait for the flying eye to pass overhead before trying to jump up. If you get hit with its flame, you'll almost certainly be knocked off the platform.

Here's where you'll face off against Alucard, the son of Dracula. You can't hurt him when he's in bat form, but when he changes into human form, hit him in the head. Use your whip to stop his fireballs.

Split-second timing is required as you try to jump past these spiked platforms.

## AREA 7, STRIP 1

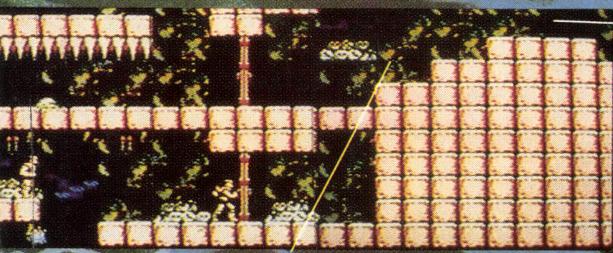


Don't jump on these spiked platforms. If you do, they'll flip around and drop you through.

Jump to the right of this platform, immediately crouch and start whipping the statue on the other side. If one of its fireballs hits you, you could be knocked back onto the rotating spiked platform. It's a long way to fall!

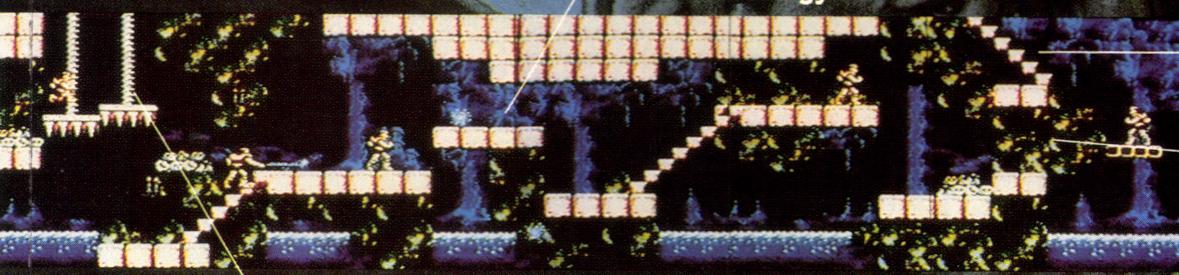
Get up close to this fire-breathing statue. Wait until it expels three fireballs, then jump and whip it. Keep doing this until the statue vanishes.

If you can avoid the green slimes, you can get a dagger here.



This way to Area 6, Strip 3.

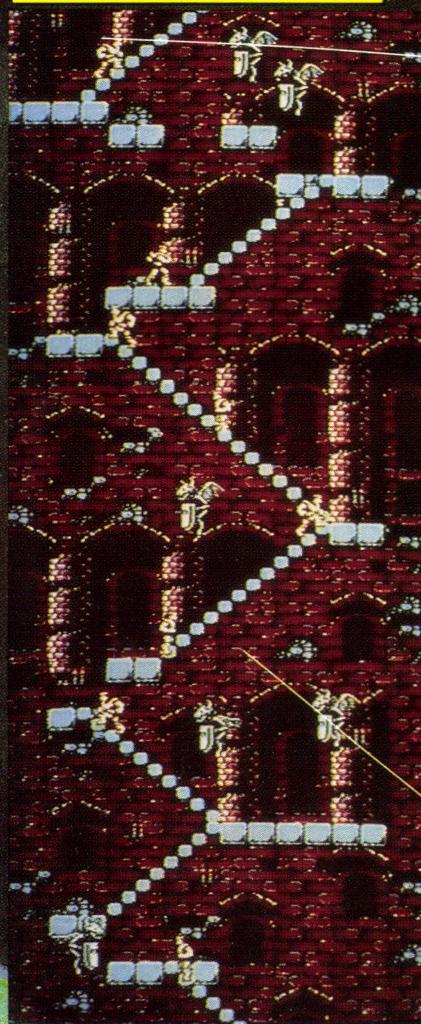
Wait until the energy ball is on the bottom of the platform, then jump. Stand on the left side of the platform, where you have plenty of head room, and wait for the ball to come around. When it does, jump and let it pass beneath you; then drop to the lower platform, trying to avoid the second energy ball.



These stairs lead up to Area 6, Strip 4.

Get an axe here.

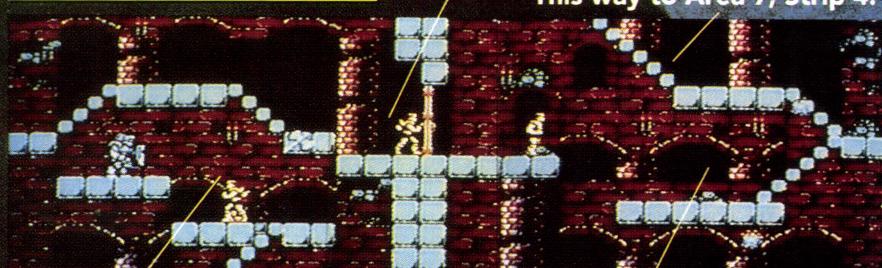
## AREA 7, STRIP 2



Take these stairs up to Area 7, Strip 3.

Above this door, hidden in a block, you'll find meat.

## AREA 7, STRIP 3



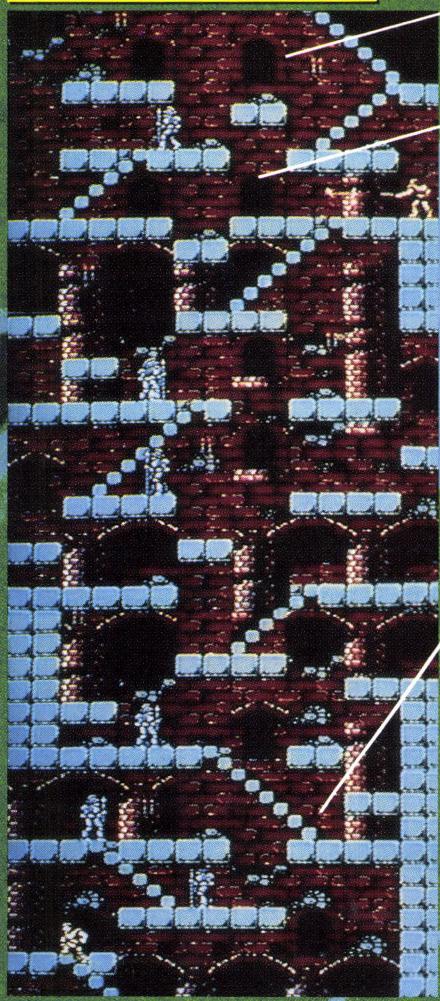
This way to Area 7, Strip 4.

Run up the stairs through the area as fast as you can. Don't stop for anything. That's the only way to avoid most of the flying enemies here.

This knight will take quite a few hits before he's destroyed. Be patient. Let him throw his axe over your head. Then jump and whip.

When the energy ball circles around to the bottom, jump onto this platform, then move quickly to the right. Jump to let the energy ball pass beneath you, then climb the stairs.

## AREA 7, STRIP 4



Take these stairs to Area 7, Strip 5.

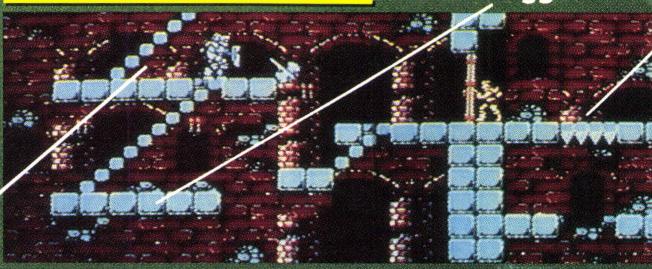
When you get to this level, you can relax. The room won't drop any farther than this.

This knight is difficult to defeat. Wait until he moves all the way to the left. Then quickly climb the stairs, turn to face him and start whipping. You won't have a moment to spare. When the knight is dead, take the stairs up to Area 7, Strip 6.

Change into Grant here. His climbing abilities give you the best chance of getting through this constantly dropping section alive.

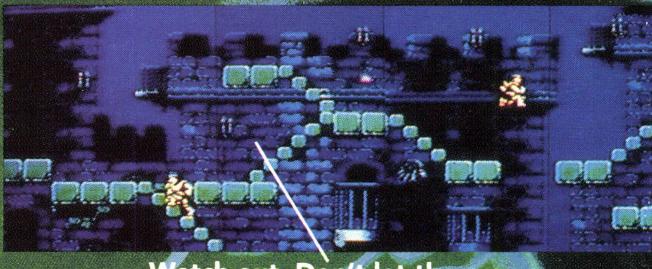
These knights throw their axes from two positions, standing and squatting. Learn to recognize

## AREA 7, STRIP 5



Get a dagger here.

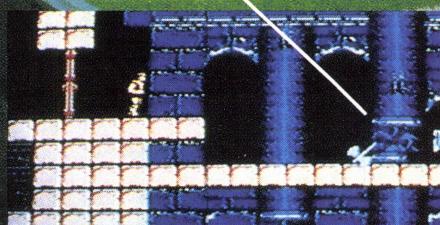
## AREA 7, STRIP 7



Watch out. Don't let the crows knock you off the platforms.

when they're about to throw an axe, and you'll be better able to defend yourself.

Lure this knight all the way to the left before jumping down to face him. If you let him retreat to the right, you'll have to fight two enemies at once.



## AREA 8, STRIP 1

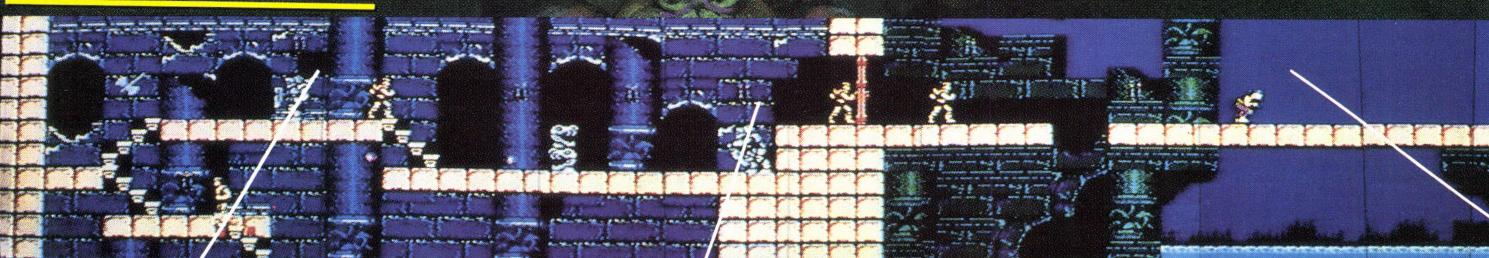
When you jump here, start whipping the statue the instant you land. Otherwise, you might get blasted back into the chasm.

## AREA 8, STRIP 2

## AREA 8, STRIP 4



You'll find a stopwatch here. Use it to freeze your enemies, making them easy prey.



Stairs down to Area 8, Strip 3.

Once you kill this last knight, don't hang around or you'll have to fight bats too.

## AREA 8, STRIP 3

Wait on the stairs for the statue to stop shooting. Then climb down and whip it into oblivion.

Just as you did in the tower, run through this section without stopping.

## AREA 7, STRIP 6

There's meat in a block here.

These stairs lead up to Area 7, Strip 7.

If you position yourself just right on these stairs, the statues' shots should pass above and below you. When it looks safe, dash for the next stairway.

Just before you step up onto this platform, your whip should be able to reach this statue.

Jump onto this platform when the statue stops shooting. Then squat and whip.

It's unlikely you can get past these statues without getting hit.

Wait until the statue here stops shooting. Then climb onto the platform, squat and whip the lower pair. When the lower pair is gone, jump, and whip the upper pair.

This is where you'll meet Frankenstein, the boss of this level. To beat him, get up onto the far-right upper blocks, where the falling rocks can't hit you. Shoot Frankenstein with your weapons, and jump whenever he throws a block.

Take this door to Area 8, Strip 2.

Walk forward through the water, and watch for dark shapes. When a dark shape approaches, whip it before it can stand and shoot. If a

dark shape comes at you from behind, quickly turn to face it.

Jump over the falls, then immediately start whipping the statue here. You don't want its fireballs to knock you back into the falls.

To get this knight, climb down the stairs and immediately jump toward him to the right. If you stay to the left, one of his axes is sure to knock you off the platform.

These are the stairs up to Area 8, Strip 4.

## AREA 8, STRIP 5

To beat the dragons, you must learn the pattern with which they rise and fall. Strike them on the head whenever you get a chance. Once you beat them, you'll be ready to enter Dracula's castle. Good luck!

You're going to need it.

Use Grant to cross these blocks. He's fast and can make it before all the blocks disintegrate.

Jumping across these platforms while avoiding the enemy takes tricky timing.

These stairs lead down to Area 8, Strip 5.

# BattleTech

## Center: The *Elvis* Connection

BY CHRIS BIENIEK

**A**s your radar scans the area for enemy craft, you can see twin suns looming close to the horizon, burning through the fog. Beyond the charred mound of scrap that used to be your partner's BattleMech, there's nothing but dirty brown rock formations and the remnants of a 30th-century relay outpost, scattered chunks of oxidized metal and twisted shreds of barbed wire. But something's amiss: the enemy Mech has vanished from your short- and long-range scanners, and you're sure it was here just moments ago. So you activate the infrared imaging system, hoping you can pick out the Mech's half-obliterated silhouette as it sneaks off into the ever-thickening fog.

Suddenly, an unexpected blast of white-hot energy sizzles from over your shoulder, causing the ground in front of you to explode. Spinning your torso around, you find yourself face-to-face with the BattleMech you thought had escaped: a mean-looking Loki V2 with one leg blown off and all active weapons charged and aimed at your head. With calm, careful precision, your hand moves the weapons joystick until the crosshair range indicator locks on target, and then you squeeze the trigger.

Since August of 1990, thousands of people have experienced a new type of interactive sport, an artificial reality where the average person can participate in a realistic simulation of 31st-century warfare. When it was demonstrated at the Consumer Electronics Show in 1989, it caused such a buzz that many interested parties couldn't even get near it. A noted celebrity in the publishing industry has inquired about having a scaled-down version installed in his mansion—no matter what the cost. Executives from Nintendo heard about it and flew in to check it out firsthand.

What is BattleTech Center, and why has it been heralded as the future of interactive electronic entertainment?

The answer to these questions can be found at North Pier in downtown Chicago, where an entrepreneurial group of role-playing game designers has unveiled the product of eight years of development. Nestled snugly on the second floor of this modern mall, BattleTech Center uses video-game technology to bring a futuristic fantasy world to life.

### WE'RE LOOKING FOR A FEW GOOD MECHWARRIORS

After signing up at the command center, potential Mech jockeys can kill some time on the BattleTech observation deck while they await their turn in combat. A wall of video screens shows a variety of scenarios, from futuristic news reports to first-person views of wars in progress. When it's time to go, uniformed BattleTech officers casually escort the participants to the "Ready Area." It's here that new players can view the training tape, a five-minute pep talk delivered by a 31st-century woman who talks as tough as a lady wrestler. "Don't be cocky!" she intones—not a bad piece of advice.

Next, the newly educated MechWarriors are informed of the status of the environment where their adventures will take place. Weather conditions vary with each game, and the player can choose the type of BattleMech he'd like to climb into. As they appear on the screen, the Mechs look like smaller, humanoid versions of the Imperial Walker vehicles that stomped on the rebel base in the film *The Empire Strikes Back*. These enormous mechanical marvels have arms, legs and heads just like human beings, but they've got thick armor instead of skin and firearms instead of

hands. Each Mech has different strengths; some are quick but don't have much armor. Others have super-powerful weaponry but aren't as maneuverable.

Once all of the game's variables have been pinned down, players can enter the launch bay: nearly 4,000 square feet of metal and concrete that contains the BattleMech cockpits. These "pods" are similar to sit-down arcade games like Atari's *Hard Drivin'* or Sega's *Line of Fire*, except there are no coin slots, no instructions and no punks watching over your shoulder as they put their quarters on the glass to reserve the next game. The rear half of the cockpit slides shut, sealing you inside. At that point, the line between reality and fantasy gets blurry.

Inside the cockpit is a padded chair that faces two video screens, a wild array of controls, a radio microphone and more switches and buttons than you can shake a stick at. Put your butt in the chair, your right hand on the weapons joystick, your left hand on the throttle, your feet on the pedals and keep your eyes on the screens! First you'll see the docking bay doors open. Your primary display gives a first-person view from the front of your Mech as you step out into a desolate planet of barren landscapes and craggy mountains.

It's a computer-generated battlefield: 100 square miles of war-torn wasteland that serve as your welcome mat, ushering you into the explosive action that makes life in the 31st century such a blast. It's oddly quiet at first, and there's not much on the screen but scattered debris, but it's not long before you encounter another BattleMech. When one of these lumbering, 80-ton armored behemoths stomps into view—well, that's when the fun *really* starts.

Up to eight players can participate in a single ten-minute game. The players

are usually split up into two teams (red and green), whose BattleMechs can be identified on the screen by the color of their markings. Unlike most video games, where your opponents' movements are usually dictated by the computer, the Mechs you see on your screen are completely controlled by the people who are sitting in the "pods" that surround you.

Everything is interactive: If you see an enemy robot on your display and start shooting at it, the player controlling the other Mech will see you firing directly at him or her. If your aim is true, they'll also see a few fireworks as their eardrums rattle from the force of a direct hit! An intercom system enhances the interaction between players by allowing you to communicate with your team members; you can plan strategies, warn a teammate who's in danger or just holler at each other.

Essentially, that's all there is to it. The Mechs walk around and shoot at each other, chasing down damaged opponents and dodging the dangerous ones. There is no on-screen scoring, but the computer does award points based on your shooting efficiency and the number of hits you've taken.

Each player starts with 1,000 points, and after the game you can gauge your performance by comparing your score to that starting total. If you're really serious about sharpening your skills, you can ask the staff to record your game on video tape (VHS only). Take it home and study it; you'll see what you did right and what you did wrong, and you can also use it to demonstrate BattleTech to interested friends. It's a helpful tool, and it costs less than \$4.

### ALL SHOOK UP

You'll hear no rinky-dink background music during a BattleTech session—only the harsh sounds of battle. Your weapons sound as powerful as they look, and the cockpits echo with the constant rumble of distant explosions. The graphics on the main display are striking as well. This isn't glorified warfare, with shiny new fighting machines; the Mechs are gritty-looking abominations, and they look even worse when they're blackened and dented from combat.

By the way, it is possible for your Mech to be destroyed. If this happens, you will reenter the battlefield as a "drone" or mini-Mech. Sure, these "consolation" Mechs don't have much offensive or defensive power, but don't underestimate them; they're particularly effective against players who choose to ignore them because of their size.

Before each game, a BattleTech officer asks you for your name or a code

# MECHWARRIOR MASTERMINDS

## Behind the Scenes at BattleTech Center

To a video-game enthusiast, there's a big difference between arcade-style action games and role-playing adventures. From that perspective, it seems ironic that the explosive BattleTech experience has its roots in the role-playing genre. I'm not referring to computer RPGs; we're talking about the real thing here, with dice, maps and a diverse library of rule books and technical manuals.

The BattleTech series of role-playing games was created in 1980 when Jordan Weisman and L. Ross Babcock III formed FASA Corporation "with \$180." Their home-grown adventure has grown into one of the most popular RPGs ever released, and it served to inspire Weisman's vision of an interactive computer "sport," one that would use the cutting edge of computer technology to bring FASA's Mechs to life.

As the idea took shape, Weisman contacted several software developers in an attempt to find the people who he thought could make his concept a reality. He eventually reached an agreement with Incredible Technologies of Northbrook, Illinois, a team of designers and programmers who have worked on numerous titles for various computers and game systems, including TurboGrafx-16, NES and a couple of coin-ops that appeared under the name of their "sister" company, Strata. With a strict outline of Weisman's concept to guide them, Incredible Technologies took a paper-and-dice game and turned it into a startlingly realistic first-person experience, one that's sure to captivate an equal number of strategy buffs and arcade fanatics alike.

The final product is an interesting hodgepodge of cannibalized computer equipment and proprietary video-game technology. Each cockpit holds a number of boards, including four separate processors and a sound computer. Interestingly,

the secondary screen in each pod is run by an Amiga 500, which handles the display of the radar scanners, damage reporting and other information about your Mech and its surroundings. The 16 pods are linked together by an IBM-based local area network, and players can watch the BattleTech officers set up the game's variables on a PC in the "Ready Area." If you're into technical stuff, you'll be interested to learn that the screen resolution of the primary display is 320 x 200, and it's capable of displaying up to 64,000 colors simultaneously, from a total palette of 16 million colors.

As you may have guessed, Incredible Technologies is BattleTech Center's closest link to the video-game industry as we know it. (If Weisman has his way, the "industry as we know it" is about to change—drastically.) The sound effects heard inside your Mech cockpit were created by Neil Falconer, a former Bally/Midway programmer who's part of a sound-design staff that's been called the best in the business. And if you're looking for coin-op veterans, look no further than Tim Skelly, the man responsible for BattleTech's graphics. His experience goes back to the days when game development was a one-man job, and his creations include a number of underrated classics like *Reactor* and the first-ever two-player cooperative game, *Rip Off*.

The electronic-entertainment industry has grown by leaps and bounds since the time of *Rip Off*. I'm sure that the people who were hooked by that game never realized that gamers of the '90s would be spending nearly \$1 per minute to enjoy their hobby, but I'm also sure that few of them had any idea that something as incredible as BattleTech Center was only a few years away.

—C. B.

name that you'd like to use. This name appears in red LED letters above your assigned "pod" and shows up at the bottom of your main screen once you're inside. After I played a few rounds under my given name, I thought I'd adopt a snazzier pseudonym. I considered some of the more obvious monikers (Flash? Spock? Boba Fett?) before deciding on "Elvis." That choice raised a few eyebrows; apparently, there's a regular customer who uses the same code name. I was thrust into the heat of battle before I had a chance to ask if that person ties up the Mechs' intercom system with any a cappella renditions of *Don't Be Cruel*.

Unlike the traditional arcade industry, BattleTech's appeal doesn't seem to be focused on teenage males. I saw men and women, in a wide variety of ages, climbing into the Mech pods, which would seem to indicate that the "Disneyland" approach (i.e., presenting BattleTech as a "ride" similar to a theme park) was not a bad idea.

Many people will be intimidated by the controls—piloting a Mech is more difficult than driving a car, in my opinion, and therefore it's a *lot* tougher than playing a video game—but curiosity attracts a lot of people, even if they only play one round and find it's not their cup of tea. The mall's trendy lakefront

Each BattleMech pod is an interesting hodgepodge of cannibalized computer equipment and proprietary video-game technology.



## CHIPS & BITS

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location seems to be a factor too: Yuppies don't seem to mind the high price of a ten-minute session.

Actor Kurt Russell, who spent the summer in Chicago working on Ron Howard's film *Backdraft*, became a frequent visitor to BattleTech Center during his stay. Russell's visits caused quite a stir, and the BattleTech staff is quick to relate anecdotes.

Russell's fiercest opponents often included kids. That points out a big difference between BattleTech Center and its closest equivalent, Photon. (See Howard H. Wen's article *The Photon Experience* in the February, 1989 VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT.) Instead of sitting in a chair and watching the action unfold on a screen, a round of Photon required players to wear a cumbersome

helmet and chest piece and run through padded hallways wielding a "pseudo-laser" pistol. A lot of players loved it, but a minimum height requirement limited its audience, and the amount of physical activity required was too much for many out-of-shape joystick wizards to handle.

On the other hand, anyone can play BattleTech. (Well, it helps if your legs are long enough to reach the foot pedals.) In the 31st century, it's not uncommon for a punk kid to be able to run rings around a tough guy like Kurt Russell and blast him mercilessly.

With that in mind, I became concerned that new players would occasionally be forced to square off against veteran MechWarriors who are intimately familiar with the more advanced functions of the game. Such features as "torso rotation" and "infrared imaging" may not be important to beginners, but these options will surely be used by the regular "pros."

To compensate for any potential imbalances, the BattleTech staff tries to watch out for experienced players and makes sure they go up against MechWarriors with similar skills. Because the backs of the closed pods are ventilated, BattleTech officers can also peek in to check on troubled players and make sug-

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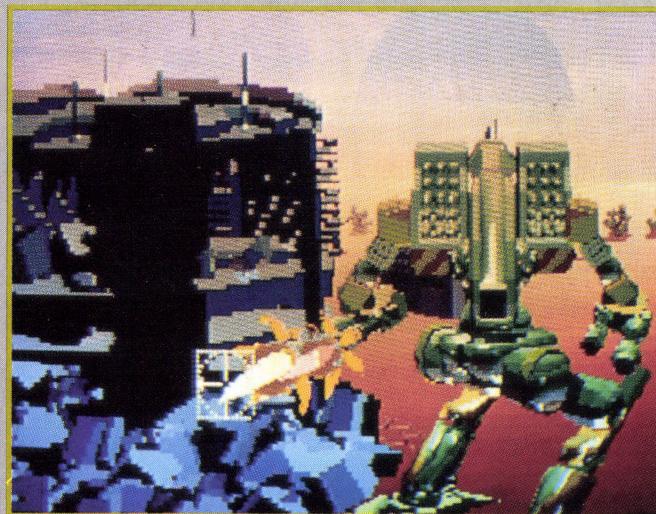
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gestions if there's a big problem. (You can leave your cockpit open if you're claustrophobic.) Of course, these intrusions can destroy the "suspension of disbelief" that a true simulator strives for, but I was grateful when one officer looked in and informed me that my Mech was about to fall

off the edge of the playing field. Nobody at BattleTech had warned me about that possibility!

BattleTech does have the occasional technical difficulties. About seven minutes into my second game, the main screen display froze, and it took several minutes for the problem to be corrected; I was told the cause was a "sound-board failure." Unfortunately, the game must be restarted when something like this happens; according to the staff, some type of equipment failure occurs once in every 100 games or so.

That's not bad, considering the



abuse the cockpits take, and players are compensated nicely for the inconvenience. If your game is interrupted because of a mechanical failure, even if your time is nearly up, you will be allowed to play another full-length session as soon as the Mechs are up and running again. Believe me, when your Mech loses an arm or a leg, and there's a locked and loaded MadCat breathing down your neck, you'll be *praying* for a sound-board failure.

#### THE 31st CENTURY...TODAY

It looks like BattleTech is going to be a hit, and there are talks of future expansion that sound too good to be true. BattleTech Centers are planned for New York, San Francisco, Las Vegas and other major cities around the world. Best of all, these locations may be linked together for tournaments, the likes of which are already under way in Chicago. Imagine a team of three champion MechWarriors in Los Angeles squaring off against the best players at a BattleTech Center in London or Paris. Such a scenario is not out of the question.

I've also been told that the Bat-

**The Chicago BattleTech facility is rumored to have cost in the neighborhood of \$3 million to design and build.**



tleTech operating system is extremely flexible in design; a few software modifications will allow different types of games to be played with the existing equipment, and some of the many switches and buttons inside the "pods" have been left available for future options. Outer-space adventures, submarine battles, futuristic sporting events—the possibilities are many and various.

Unfortunately, BattleTech Center may be too far ahead of its time. The Chicago facility is rumored to have cost in the neighborhood of \$3 million to design and build. That's a pretty ritzy neighborhood, and that overhead is reflected in the cost to the consumer. Currently, players can't enter the 31st century for less than \$6, and on weekends, that same experience costs \$8.

The total time between entering the "ready area" and exiting the launch bay can be as long as a half hour, but the actual playing time inside the "pods" is a strict ten minutes—barely enough time for new players to get accustomed to the controls.

Still, if you enjoy video games, you owe it to yourself to check out BattleTech Center, even if it's only for one session. Those who can afford to spend some time mastering the intricacies of 31st-century combat may never go back to the more traditional forms of entertainment.

And if you see the King, tell him I said "Hi."

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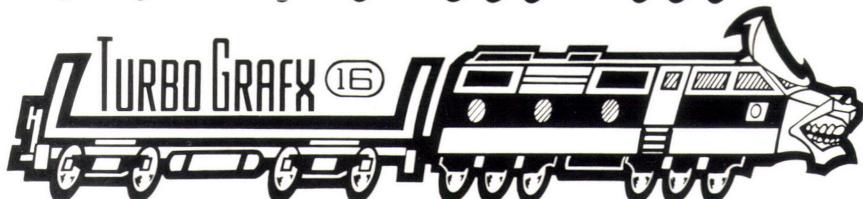
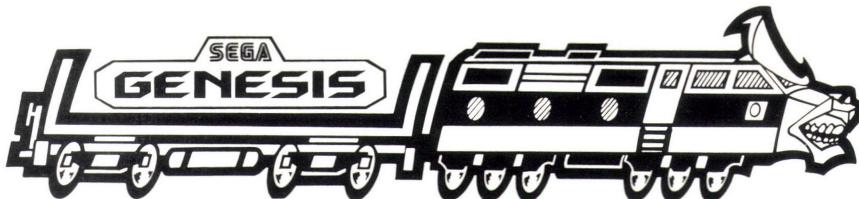
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# THE CASTLE OF ILLUSION



## Strategy Guide, Part I

by Donn Nauert

**O**ne day, Mickey and Minnie were dancing in a meadow outside Vera City, when suddenly, the sun stopped shining, and the birds stopped singing. Big, thick, gray clouds started closing in on the blue skies.

"Don't worry, Minnie. It'll pass soon," Mickey said reassuringly.

Wham! A bolt of lightning crashed down from the sky, and before he had a chance to react, Minnie was gone. He looked up in time to see the wicked witch Mizrabel flying into the sunset with Minnie in her bony old fingers. The old witch is jealous of Minnie's beauty and plans to steal it from her. The only one who can save Minnie is Mickey, but first he must get past the Masters of Illusion and retrieve the seven Gems of the Rainbow in the Castle of Illusion.

The following maps show the game played in the normal setting. In other settings, the placement of objects such as stars, marbles and diamonds may differ. For example, in the normal setting, if an apple is in one location, a diamond may appear there in the hard setting. The maps themselves are the same; it's the strategies that will differ. In the hard setting, the enemies come out more frequently than in the normal setting. I played the game to score as many points as possible, which meant throwing as few items as I could. In the hard setting you have fewer items to work with from the start, so the basic strategies will work for both settings.

This strategy guide deals with the first three levels of the Castle of Illusion. Next month we'll lead you through the rest of the game. Good luck!

# THE ENCHANTED FOREST

## Level 1-1



This is your first enemy encounter, an evil tree stump.



When you start this section, you'll be greeted by two angry stumps.

Be sure to grab these apples. You can throw them at the evil creatures.



Getting the stars will add to your life gauge.

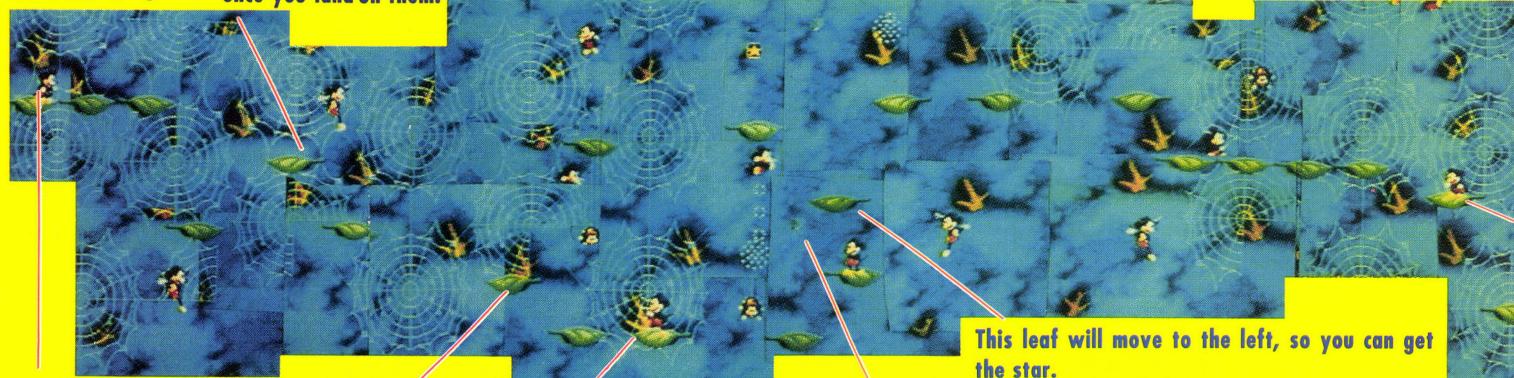


You can get on this vine and, if you have a few days, swing back and forth until you max out your score. You can accumulate about 95,000 points an hour here, but the maximum number of men you can get is ten.

Don't pass up the chance to get this bag of apples...

## LEVEL 1-3

Some leaves, like this one, move once you land on them.



You now find yourself high up in the trees with the spiders.

Here's another moving leaf.

This one will move into the path of the spider on the right.

This leaf will move to the left, so you can get the star.

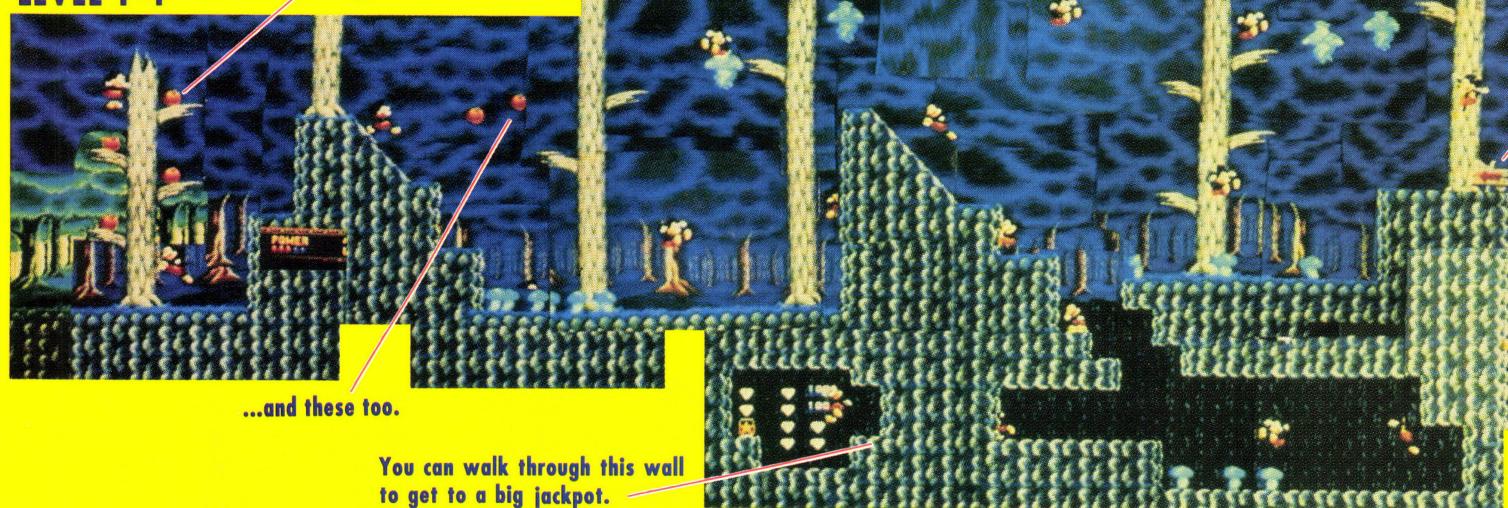
Be on the lookout for the butterflies in this section. They're green and blend in nicely—maybe too nicely—with the background.

...to get to a small jackpot.

"Bounce attack" across these ghouls...

## LEVEL 1-4

Grab these apples...



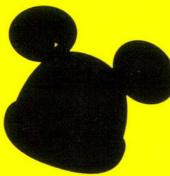
...and these too.

You can walk through this wall to get to a big jackpot.

When you're on the swinging rope, you're invincible.

These tulips show they don't like you by spitting poison seeds at you.

Remember, you can press the jump button twice to "bounce attack" your enemies and save your apples.



...or this extra man.

Watch out for this huge apple as you make your last dash to the exit. It's anything but friendly and is just waiting for a chance to smash Mickey.

At this point, the screen will fade to black and you'll start another section.

...or this extra man.

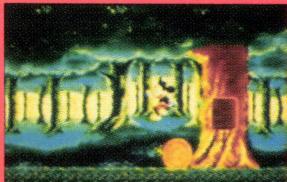
Make it to this exit, and you'll start the last section of the level.

This leaf will move to the right, enabling you to get the star here. Just walk off the edge to land on the leaf below, but be careful: One wrong step and no more Mickey.

Although the sign says to go back, you can make this jump. Or you can use the ghouls above.

There are three bags of apples in this section. To use them to get the most points, you can throw apples to clear the mushrooms you need to get by. Once you get down to 20, grab another bag. If you do it right, you can go against the end boss with 30 apples in your inventory.

### End Boss



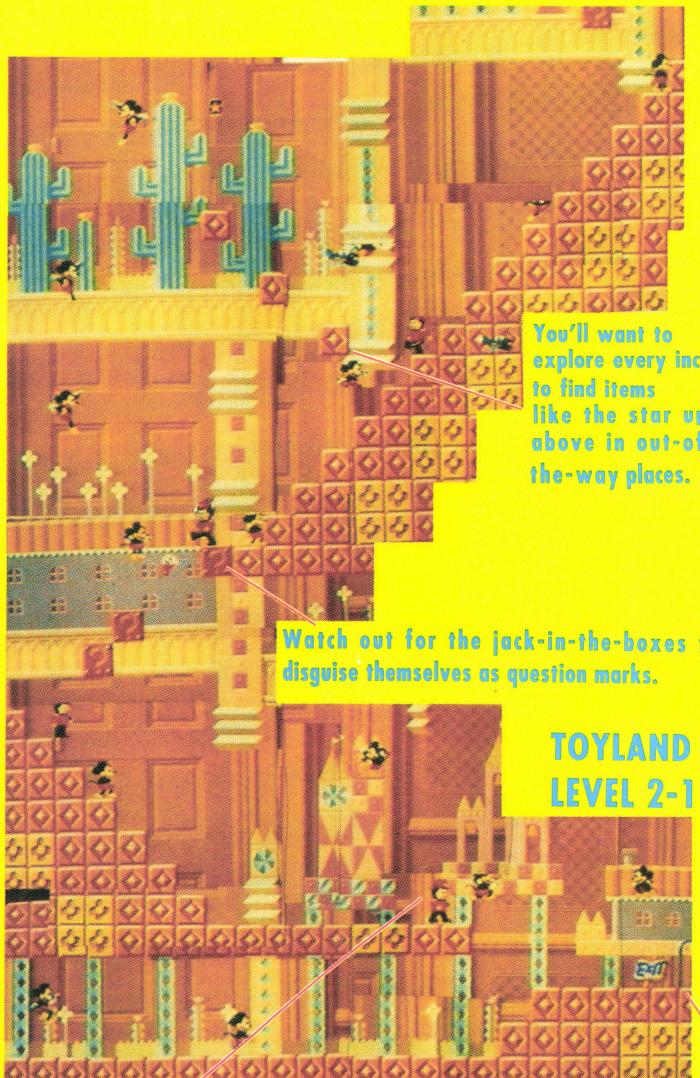
If you want to get past this rolling log without using any apples, work your way to the right. Then, as he approaches, jump over him to the middle of the screen...



...so that you will have room to maneuver when the acorns start to fall...

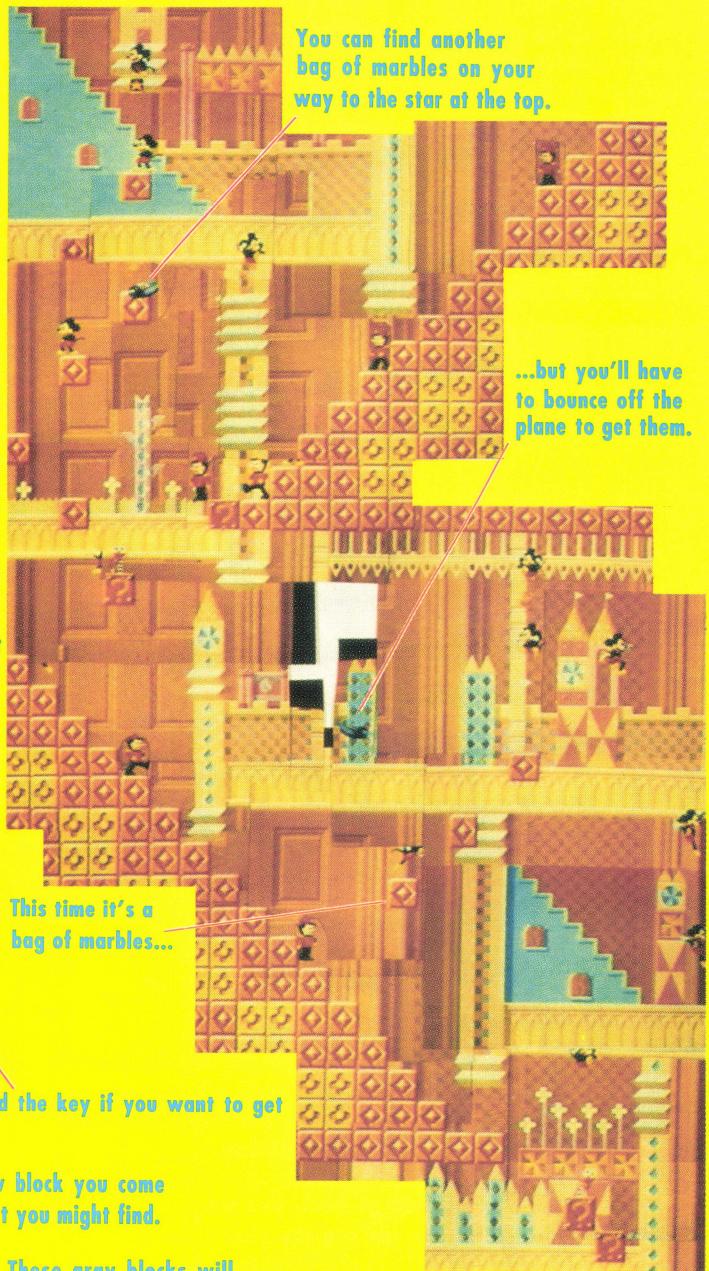
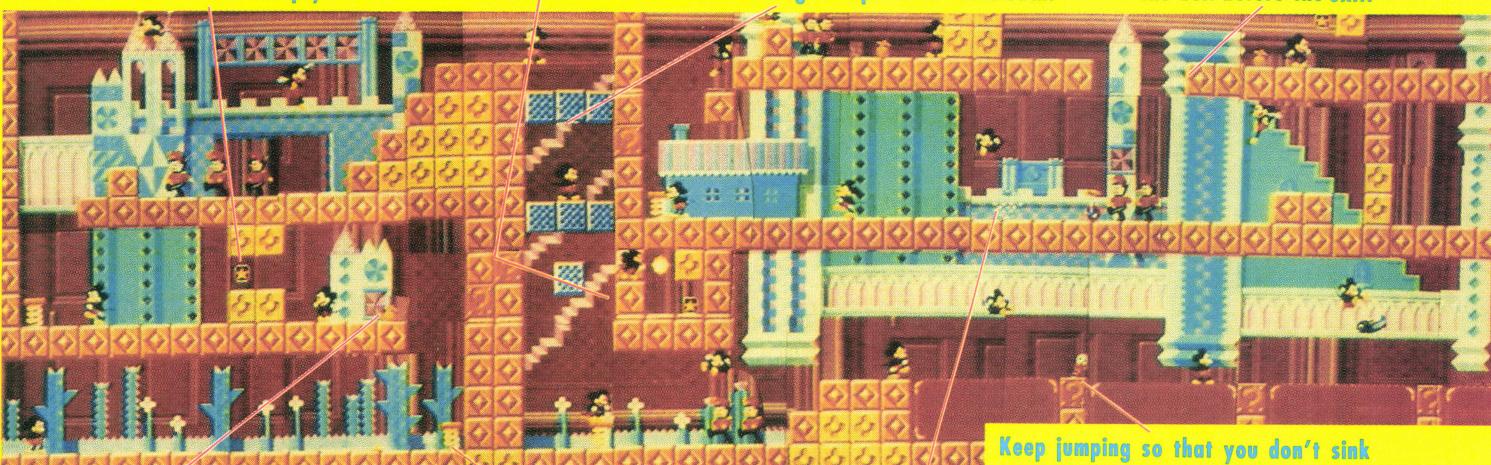


...then "bounce attack" the log.



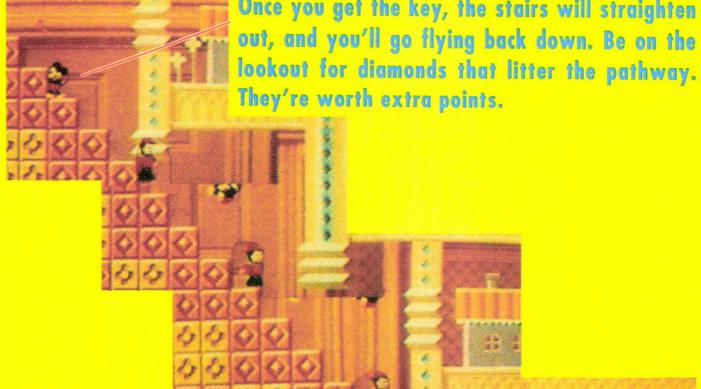
You'll encounter toy soldiers along walkways and stairs.

## LEVEL 2-2



A juggling clown riding a unicycle will appear here. Knock the clown off to send his bike flying into the soldiers for some easy points.

Once you get the key, the stairs will straighten out, and you'll go flying back down. Be on the lookout for diamonds that litter the pathway. They're worth extra points.



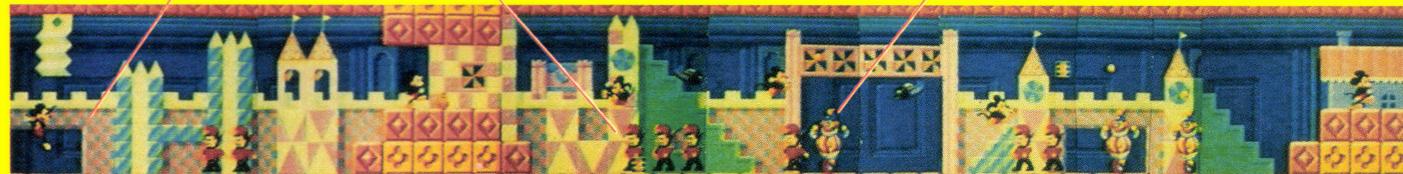
Just a few more soldiers before you reach the key.

This section is strange: Only a few games reverse so that you're upside down. A few put your character upside down, but I can't think of any that also flip the background...

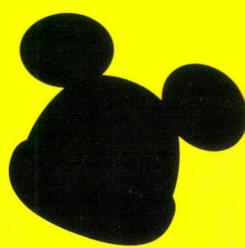
## LEVEL 2-3



...and these switch boxes are what does it.

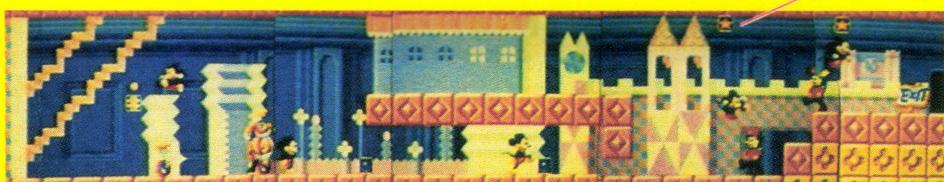


You'll have to bounce off an enemy to reach the star and ball here.



...so will this one.

Be sure to bounce off the soldiers to get the stars before going through the exit.



## End Boss



For the killer clown here, you can stay in the far-left corner. He'll bounce over the top but never on you. It might be a good idea to keep ducking in the corner, because after two or three hops, he'll stop and take a punch at you.



After he takes a punch at you, four small springs will fly into the air. Don't worry, they won't hurt you. Once a spring has landed, use it to "bounce attack" on the clown's head. After you hit its head, go left so that you will return to the corner. If you don't move left soon enough, you won't hit the left wall, and if you don't hit the wall on your way down, you'll get hit by the clown on his way back up.



The major benefit of the switch blocks is that every enemy character on the screen at the time of the flip is destroyed. This comes in handy when you're facing these clowns.

## LEVEL 3-1

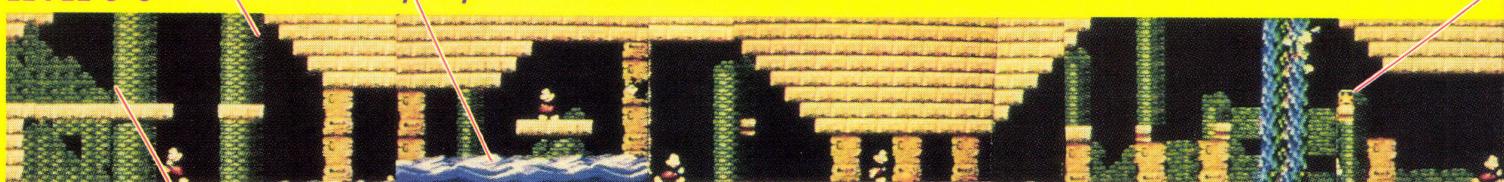


## LEVEL 3-2



Not shown is a bat that is ready and waiting for you to get close enough for him to pounce on Mickey.

## LEVEL 3-3

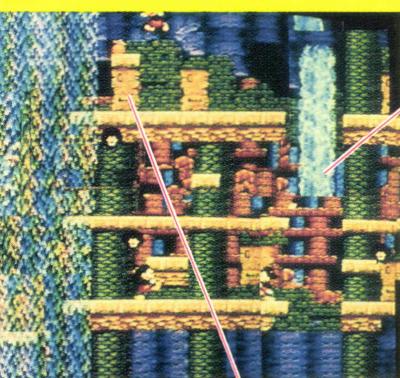


Once again, jumping at the right moment will get Mickey through this section. When the rapids reach their peak, they will sweep Mickey away.

Yes, this is a *fast* water crossing...



Bounce off the mushroom to reach the stars.

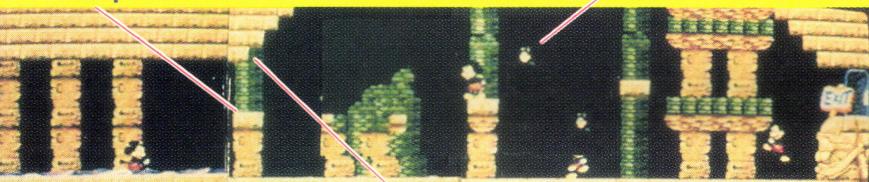


This section is fairly straightforward—keep moving to the right and make the jumps. There are items placed in out-of-the-way spots.

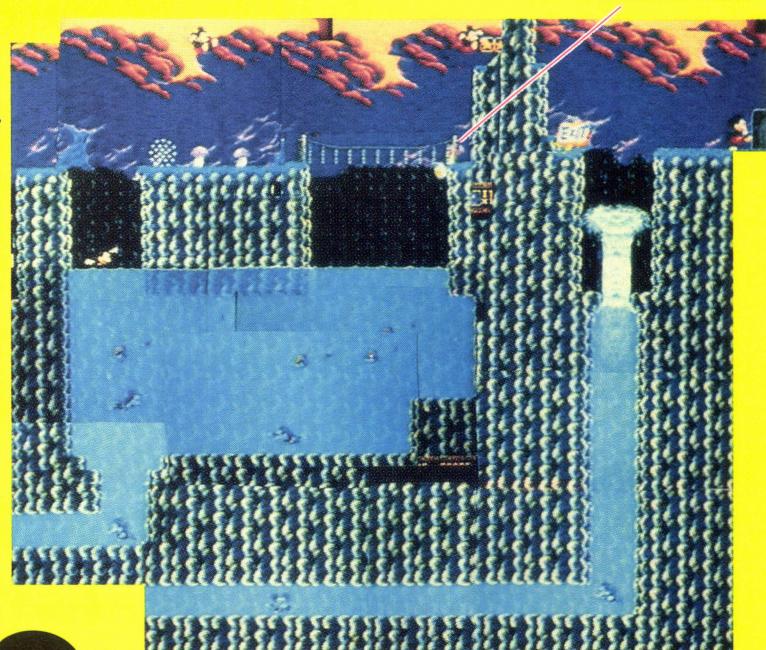


...with two last tries—one here, the other right before the exit—to knock Mickey down before reaching the exit.

Speed and timing are the two ingredients that will get you through this section, especially here. The waters will rise very quickly between these two perches, so you must drop down just as the water starts to lower, and jump to the other perch at the last second.



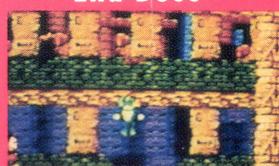
This maneuver is complicated by the fact that if you jump too early, you'll hit your head on the top, and you'll get caught in the raging water.



These bats, which will come at you from both directions, are the only things that stand in your way of the exit and facing the end boss.



## End Boss



The first four frogmen will jump from out of the top of the pillars to the right and land between the fifth and sixth block (counting from the left). Each new frogman will inch closer to you as he lands. If you can time the jump properly, you can "bounce attack" them. The fifth and last frogman will land on the fourth block, so you'll have to adjust where you stand and your timing as well. This might be the only end boss that you'll actually have to throw items at to get by.

## Bugs Bunny Birthday Ball

BALLY/MIDWAY

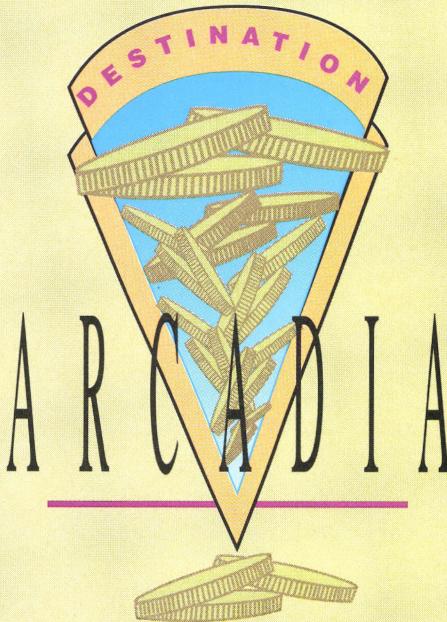
The year 1991 marks the 50th birthday of everyone's favorite rabbit, Bugs Bunny. To help celebrate, Bally has released *Bugs Bunny's Birthday Ball*, and virtually every Looney Tunes character is in attendance for the bash.

Not only does this pinball table signal the silver anniversary of "that wascawy wabbit," but it also makes several firsts in the world of pinball. For starters, there's the two-sided Daffy Duck captive ball, and with every "Big Score" shot you'll earn 500,000 points.

However, the really big points can be earned when you help Bugs blow out all nine candles. Once you do so, you'll light the bonus

held by Honey Bunny worth 50 million points.

That's right, 50 million points. Just for blowing out all the candles and



by **Donn Nauert**

shooting the ball back in the capture hole. This is a shot that most flipper players can handle; it's getting all the candles out that can prove to be difficult, because

the number of candles Bugs will



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spelling L-O-O-N-E-Y T-U-N-E-S for a possible million points. Let the Tasmanian Devil and She Devil take you on a shopping spree worth up to 500,000 points or get an extra ball on the swirling Tasmanian Shop and Spree center ramp. Even when your game is over, you get a chance for a nice treat with the surprise present. Keep it and you could score 1 million extra points, or hit the special for an extra game.

This is one pinball machine with a large variety of targets and shots, and it should



blow out each time you make it into the hole is random.

Other scoring possibilities include the "Tweety cake slide" for a million points and completing the target banks and

give any pinball player plenty of scoring options. On top of the tightly designed playfield, the pinball has excellent sound with all the voices of the characters playing their parts. From the whoosh sound as Bugs blows out his candles, to Yosemite Sam egging you on, to Tweety saying "I tot I saw

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an extra ball...I did, I did see an extra ball." If you're into pinball and you grew up with the Looney Tunes characters—name one person who didn't!—you'll love this one.

## Rampart

ATARI

Take a little trip back in history to an era when knights and lords ruled the land. To a time when a man's castle was truly a castle. Back to the Middle Ages. In *Rampart*, by Atari, you take on the role of master builder and conqueror as you try to protect your castle from an invading armada and other overlords. Armed only with a battery of cannons, you try to sink the invading ships before they reach shore, or destroy your opponent's castle walls before they destroy yours. Simple, right? Not quite.

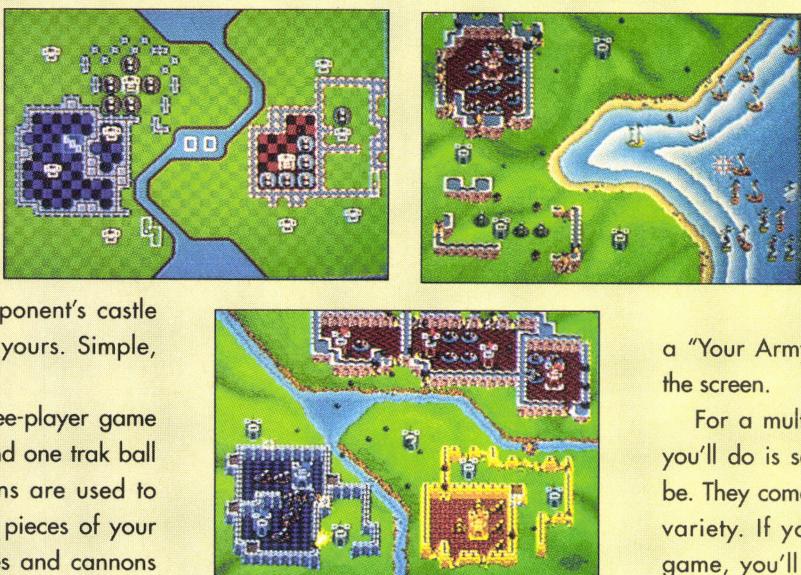
*Rampart* is a one-to-three-player game that features two buttons and one track ball per player. The two buttons are used to start your game, turn new pieces of your wall and place those pieces and cannons into position as well as firing your cannons. The track-ball is used to move either the fresh piece of wall or cannon into position, and also to aim your cannon fire once you're in combat.

If you select a one-player game, your opponent is an invading armada that's controlled by the computer. Before you start, though, it's time to select a location on the map; there are four different locations with varied shorelines to pick.

You also have two difficulty settings to choose from: the recruit level is for beginners and offers the player a chance to learn the game. It doesn't take long to realize that you're going to have to shoot fast and place the pieces of your wall quickly in order to survive. The veteran level is for the advanced player who would like to start off hard and reap the reward of 5,000 bonus points. (The game scores low, so 5,000

points would be the same as 1 million points in a game like *Star Wars*.)

Once you've chosen the location, you'll be asked to select a castle to defend, but here's the tricky part: Some castles, as you can see in the photo, are close to shore, which cuts down on the time it takes your cannonballs to travel; but having your castle up against the water means you'll have to get an exact match to repair a hole in the wall. On the other hand, some castles are farther away, but this gives you more room to build and repair your castle. It depends on what strategy you want to take



**Travel back to the Middle Ages, where you'll build your castle and defend it from an invading armada and warring overlords, in *Rampage*.**

that will determine which castle to select.

All of this will make sense as soon as you finish the first wave of battle, when the screen clears to show an outline of your castle wall or, more accurately, what's left of your castle wall. Then you'll have approximately 15 seconds to make all repairs and surround your castle once again. The problem is that the pieces that you use to repair your walls are different shapes, much like those found in *Tetris*, and because the pieces appear randomly, you may not get the perfectly fitting piece when you want it. This more often than not is the reason you end up defeated.

Other problems can occur if you allow the crew of one of the enemy ships to come ashore. They'll slowly work their way toward your castle in tanklike vehicles, devouring all other nonprotected castles along the way. Once they reach your castle and prevent you from completing a wall, it's "game over."

There are three types of ships you'll face. One is a large two-sail schooner that's very slow, a sitting duck. Another type of ship is a warship that is fast and difficult to sink. Both of these ship types require two hits to be sunk. The third type, the red-flag ship is another story: The cannonballs this ship fires will do severe damage to your castle and the ground it hits, causing you to have to work around these areas. It also takes a few hits to bring this ship down. If you can survive this wave, you'll usually see a "Your Army" conquers sign appear on the screen.

For a multiplayer game, the first thing you'll do is select what army you want to be. They come in the blue, red and orange variety. If you're playing a two-player game, you'll have five castles to choose from and protect, whereas in a three-player game you'll have only four. The object here is, simply put, to destroy the walls of your opponent (which are separated by a moat) and become the medieval overlord of your block. All other aspects of the game remain pretty much intact.

What initially attracted me to this game wasn't the graphics or sound, both of which are plain and simple, the highlight being a voice yelling out "cease fire" in a deep monotone. It's the game play, which could be best described as an updated and medieval version of *Missile Command*. Each time I've played *Rampart*, three to four hours have disappeared in the blink of an eye, and it's no wonder when you realize this game was programmed by the same designers of such hits as *Cyberball*, *Paperboy* and *720°*. All I have to say is, great game, guys! ■

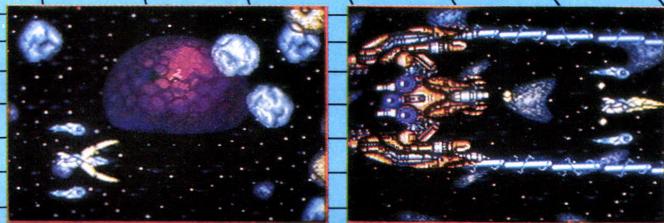
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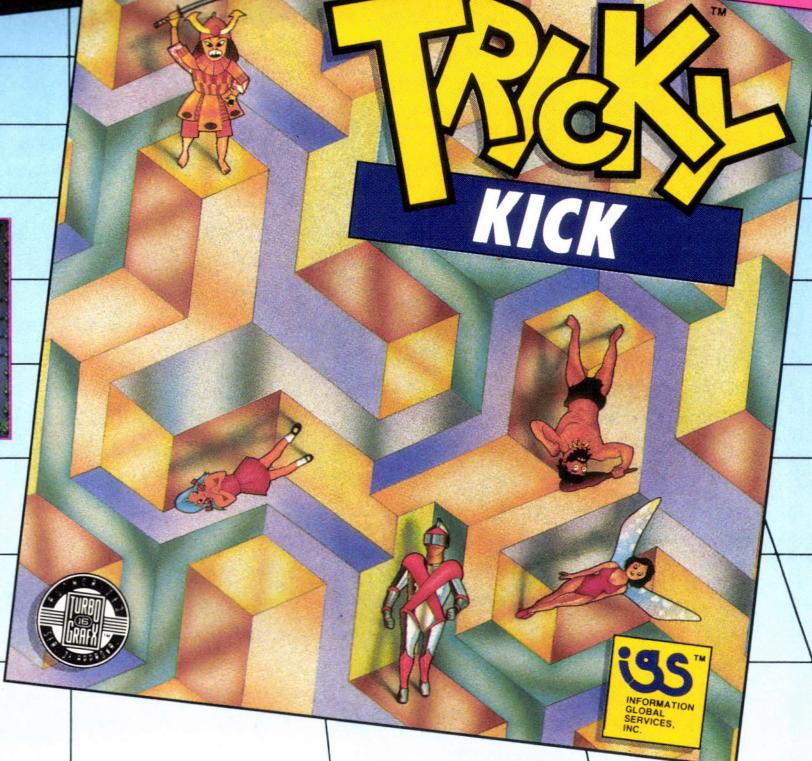
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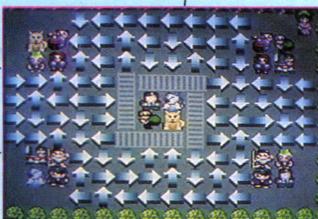
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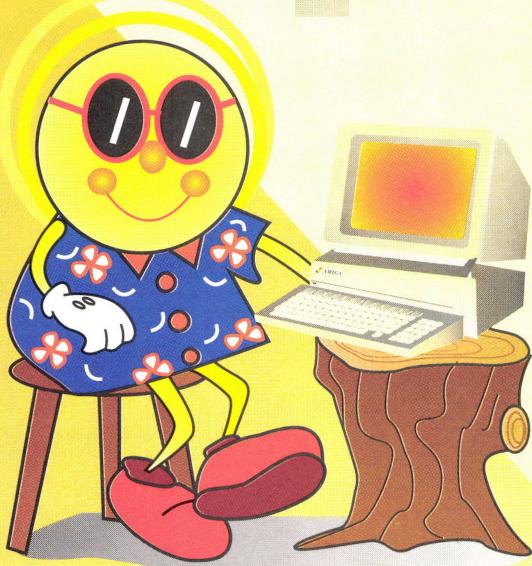
# SUMMER COMPUTER

## GUIDE

Preview

INNOVATIVE  
TECHNOLOGY  
INSPIRES  
AMBITIONOUS  
SOFTWARE  
DEVELOPMENT

by Arnie Katz, Bill Kunkel and  
Joyce Worley



**C**ompletely new computer-based systems and improved technology for existing ones are fueling a lot of product development activity by computer software publishers. Behind closed doors, VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT's editors have seen preliminary material for some truly amazing electronic-gaming advances.

The bad news is that few of these marvels are marked for immediate delivery. Some of the most fascinating games probably won't be available until mid-1992. The most farsighted publishers are actually creating software for hardware systems that won't even be introduced until late next year.

A lot of the ground-breaking work involves compact disc, but there's significant spillover to conventional computer software as well. Companies may have their corporate eye on tomorrow, but they can't afford to forget today's market. Ideas spawned by the long-term projects are trickling down to 1991 games on disk.

That's why so many software makers plan to push the limits of existing hardware with 1991 releases. Many labels plan huge games that virtually require a hard disk and one to two megabytes of internal RAM.

### THE NEW REALISM

Computer games will never match the mass appeal of video games, but they are sure to remain a viable, important segment of the electronic-gaming market. That's the prevailing view among the men who should know best, the people who publish entertainment software for home computers. The Winter Consumer Electronics Show, the industry mega-event held in January in Las Vegas, found the industry in an upbeat, but realistic mood.

Upbeat, because computer-game sales are holding firm even as the 8-bit video-game market shrinks. Realistic, because few publishers now believe that so-called computer video games (computer software designed to imitate the type of games popular in cartridge format) can do for them what *Mario Brothers* does for Nintendo.

Eighteen months of declining sales, climaxing in the disastrous second quarter of 1990, forced industry-wide reevaluation of the business. Soft sales for funware reflected the steady erosion of the 8-bit computer market. First the Atari XE, then the Apple II and, finally, the Commodore 64 dropped out of the mainstream commercial market.

The higher price of IBM PC gear,

compared to the C-64, made it increasingly likely that newly interested electronic gamers would pick a video game console as their first machine, rather than a full-fledged computer. Today's computer gamers are older, better educated and more affluent than five years ago.

As might be expected, this altered buying patterns. The market for cheap, action-oriented games, such as ones churned out by the score in the UK, dried up so quickly that excess generic product choked the distribution channels and deepened the sales slide.

Another casualty was the ill-fated idea of competing for the video-game dollar with computer contests that look, sound and play like video games. Not only is this the least favorite type of electronic game for computerists, but the hardware has proven unequal to the task of presenting fast-action arcade fare. IBM PC games just don't have the sheer speed for frenetic shooters, even if consumers wanted them.

### THE HOT HARDWARE

The cost of getting into home computing is getting more reasonable again. Apple introduced more affordable versions of the black-and-white and color Macintosh, the Classic and the IIC; IBM now offers the PS/1; and Commodore will offer CD-ROM power in a user-friendly black box called Commodore Dynamic Total Vision (CDTV).

Don't expect to see significant quantities of CDTV consoles appearing in stores until fall. CDTV is expected to retail for an eyelash under \$1,000 and

will be sold initially in discount store chains.

Commodore's Gail Wellington promises an impressive software library will be there to support CDTV by the time it enters full national rollout. The only game unveiled so far is a CD version of *Defender of the Crown*, but it's basically the Cinemaware classic enhanced with extensive speech. It's also a safe bet that Tiger Media will bring *Airwave Adventure* and its other titles to CDTV, since the publisher supports all CD-based platforms.

### SYSTEM SHUFFLE

Computer-game development in this country now focuses almost exclusively on IBM PC. Amiga and Atari ST are sometimes primary development systems for the top European houses, but the emphasis in this country is on IBM and its numerous clones. IBM PCs and clones account for at least three-fourths of 1991 game sales.

Development of the 8-bit is rapidly becoming extinct. There's still a market in Europe, especially the United Kingdom, but distribution for C-64 software in the United States has shrivelled to almost nothing in the last year. Even when a C-64 original does appear, it is next to impossible for its publisher to get enough copies into retail channels.

The Macintosh Classic's potential to greatly expand the audience for Mac gameware has excited several publishers. Porting an IBM PC or Amiga game to the Mac is very difficult, due to technical differences between the systems and the need to follow Macintosh standards to the letter when writing programs.

Larger sales potential makes the extra effort worthwhile, at least in the opinion of software manufacturers like Interplay and Sir-Tech. Interplay has finished a version of *Battle Chess* with all-new animations, while the latter continues to upgrade its Macintosh *Wizardry* line.

New technology seldom arrives without suffering a few setbacks, and CD is not immune to this. Apple's announced delay (to mid-1992) for its Macintosh



**Top and middle:** Heart of China, by Dynamix. **Bottom left:** Accolade's Conspiracy: The Deadlock File. **Bottom right:** Links, by Access.

CD-ROM drive has already triggered a Sierra On-Line decision to slow down its CD software development. The Coarsegold, California, adventure-gaming leader intends to wait until the hardware can support full-motion video before plunging into the CD field.

Dissatisfaction with current CD hardware is rampant among prospective CD software publishers. There's a growing opinion that hardware manufacturers will have to toss away the security blanket of audio compatibility and introduce CD systems with a much higher data-transmission speed.

### SEQUEL-MANIA STRIKES!

In times of economic uncertainty the search for the "sure thing" can become

an obsession. A tactic beloved by all media is the sequel. The logic is inescapable: If people liked it the first time, they are apt to like it again.

Sequels are as popular in electronic gaming as in movies or the horror-fiction field. Companies are scheduling an unusually high number of such titles for the next six months. If you have a favorite computer game, don't be surprised to see its sequel before next Christmas.

Several approaches in producing a sequel are in common use today. Here are some of the major ones:

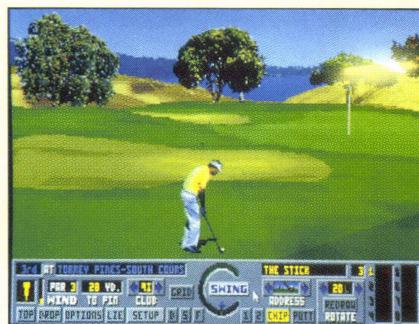
#### • Another chapter of an ongoing story:

*Ultima VI* (Origin Systems/Amiga, IBM PC) and *King's Quest V* (Sierra On-Line/Amiga, IBM PC) are the latest chapters in continuing interactive epics that began early in the 1980s and continue to be fantastically popular today.

*King's Quest V* may well be the last chapter of the saga that Roberta Williams will unfold for her legion of dedicated fans. The "Queen of Adventure Gaming" plans to devote her design energies to other projects. *King's Quest* may continue, loosely under her supervision, but other minds will create the plot, characters and settings of future installments. For her last *King's Quest* hurrah, Roberta broke with control systems from the past. Unlike previous Sierra adventures, *King's Quest V* has no parser. Play moves rapidly with icons and menus, and there are no "word-guessing games" to dispel the mood.

#### • A more elaborate version of the same title:

Game design and development is a dynamic process. The act of doing a game can give the team insights into how they could have done it much better.



*Wing Commander II* (Origin Systems/IBM PC) should reach stores about the same time as this issue of VG&CE. Even though *Wing Commander* itself is still relatively new, fans of the first-person outer-space shooter are definitely going to want the new program. The designer has become much more fluent in the visual language of cut scenes, and the noninteractive sequences of *Wing Commander II* are outstanding animated science fiction.

#### • An extension of an existing idea to new territory:

One of the most remarkable programs scheduled to premiere this summer is *Life and Death II* (Software Toolworks/IBM PC). The medical-operation simulation now has a companion program that explores brain surgery in exhaustive depth. Like its predecessor, this is truly an education, as well as an entertainment experience, since the precise simulation is a unique opportunity to learn about physical function and medical procedures.

#### • An update of a product adversely affected by time:

The revised version of *Gulf Strike* (Avalon Hill/IBM PC), due out in June, takes an excellent military simulation of Middle East warfare and makes it better. The new revision adds scenarios relating to the current crisis in Iraq (including thought-provoking what-if possibilities). Those who missed the electronic edition of the classic board-game the first time around may want to remedy the oversight by taking a look at the new scenarios.

#### ENTERTAINMENT EXTENDERS

Second cousin to the sequel is the product extension. Many sports simulations, like *MicroLeague Baseball II* (MLSA/IBM PC, Macintosh), have annual data disks with statistics based on the 1990 season.

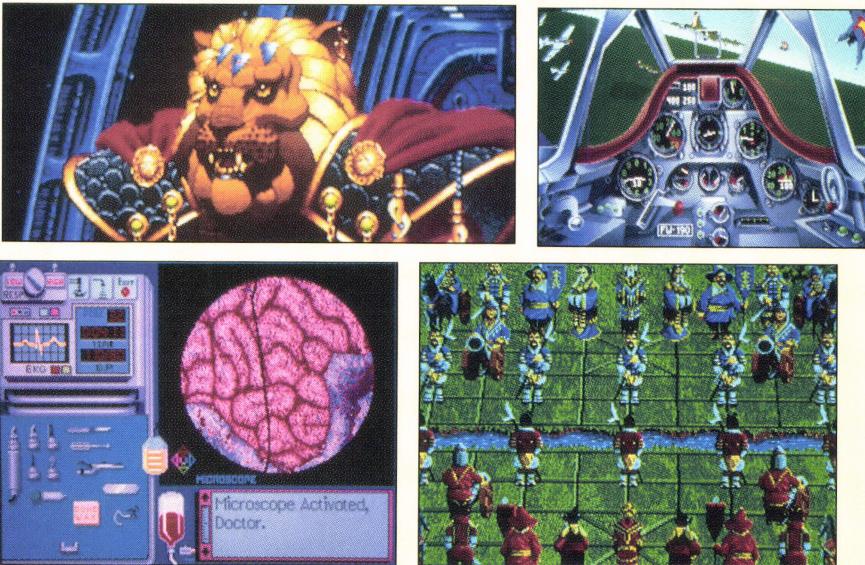
Driving games often have add-on disks. Accolade is already producing extra disks for use with *Test Drive III* (Amiga, IBM PC). Each has one or two new cars as well as a complete set of scenery disk.

Extra course disks for golf games like *Jack Nicklaus* (Accolade/Amiga, Apple IIGS, Commodore 64, IBM PC,

Macintosh) and *Links* (Access/IBM PC) will continue in the current year. According to Access spokesman Steve Witzel, the Salt Lake City publisher wants to produce a new course every two months during 1991 to keep the challenge fresh. In a similar vein, Access plans a free bimonthly newsletter to help players.

*SimCity* (Maxis Software) proved to be such a hit that the publisher is coming

**Clockwise from top left:** Origin Systems' *Wing Commander II*, Lucasfilm's *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe*, Software Toolworks' *Life and Death II*, and Interplay's *Deluxe Battle Chess*.



out with disks featuring new graphic sets. Announced for release this year are *SimCity Graphics Sets* for the Wild West, ancient Asia, future Europe, future U.S.A., moon colony and medieval eras.

#### SOPHISTICATED ACTION

It's overly simplistic to characterize computer gamers as armchair adventurers and video gamers as action aces. Computerists like colorful, kinetic contests, but most of them prefer a blend of mental and physical challenge. Current video games have inspired computer-game designers, but video games on disk for IBM PCs and clones haven't sold well. This summer's action computer games offer more logical situations and tactical options than the usual video game cartridge.

*Lemmings* (Psygnosis/Amiga, Atari ST, IBM PC, Macintosh) is the cleverest action game since *Tetris*, and it is

scheduled to appear on many computer- and video game systems in the next year. The gamer solves a playfield by constructing a path to safety for a line of mindless lemmings. An icon bar at the bottom center of the playfield lets the user assign special powers to individual lemmings to circumvent the deadly obstacles in their path.

#### VICARIOUS SIMULATORS

"The Battle of the Biplanes," begun last winter, will continue through this coming summer. Joining last year's *Wings* (Cinemaware/Amiga, IBM PC) and *Blue Max* (Three-Sixty Software/IBM

PC) are *Red Baron* (Brøderbund/IBM PC) and *Knights of the Skies* (MicroProse/IBM PC).

Also on its way is *Ancient Art of War in the Skies* (Brøderbund/IBM PC). Like the other disks in this series, this World War I air game is relatively simple to learn so that even novices can master the mechanics and get down to the real fun of aerobatics and combat flying. The player deploys squadrons and conducts the individual dogfights when he or she meets the enemy.

Don Hill, Jr., has produced a color version of his popular *Fokker Triplane* (Bullseye Software) flight simulator for owners of the various versions of the Apple Macintosh II series. It is virtually identical to the smooth-playing 1988 title, but the color is a welcome enhancement.

Lawrence Holland's *Secret Weapons of the Luftwaffe* (Lucasfilm/IBM PC) is a



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richly textured combat-flight simulator. The user can choose from nine aircraft and 25 missions in this *Battle of Britain* sequel about the 1943-1945 air war.

The electronic battlefield series kicks off with the latest version of a favorite title, *Falcon 3.0* (Spectrum HoloByte/Amiga, IBM PC). Three theaters of operations, Kuwait, Panama and Israel, are depicted in 3-D-modeled terrain for individual missions and lengthier campaigns. The next title in this new line, *Avenger A-10*, should be available by this fall.

Dale Brown's novel "Flight of the Old Dog" comes to the gaming screen as *MegaFortress* (Three-Sixty Software/Amiga, IBM PC). The player controls the five crew members in a huge B-52H on missions against a variety of foes, including Iraq. The role-playing and cinematic elements in *MegaFortress* make this a lot more exciting than the typical flight simulator.

The first multi-ship helicopter simulator, *Gunship 2000*, (MicroProse/Amiga, IBM PC) transports strategists to the battlefields of tomorrow's headlines. Missions in Europe and the Middle East give copter jockeys a chance to try all kinds of missions with any of the seven craft represented in the game. The air warrior can assemble a squadron of up to five helicopters, including three different types of machines, to tackle these perilous missions.

#### **SPEAKING OF SPORTS**

No one disputes the popularity of sports titles, but there weren't quite as many new games last year as in previous years. The field was overstocked with some types of sports games, and publishers cut product introductions.

The prevailing opinion seems to be, "If you can't do it different and better, don't do it." Expect the trend to reverse in the next six to nine months as long-term development projects reach market.

Designer Ed Dombrower has gotten virtually all the kinks out of the original design for *Earl Weaver II* (Electronic

Arts/IBM PC). It remains a flexible simulation for one or two would-be major league managers, but the graphics are vastly superior, the interface is less confusing and anomalies in statistics have been corrected. Baseball fans should put this one on the "must buy" list.

Scouts say *TV Sports: Baseball* (Cinemaware/Amiga, IBM PC) will be ready for armchair managers before the real season All-Star game break. Cinemaware scuttled the original project and is developing a wholly new action-strategy, stat-influenced program under the direction of Cinemaware founder Bob Jacob.



**Top: Earl Weaver II, by Electronic Arts.  
Bottom: Pic 'n' Pile, by Ubi Soft.**

An unusual and effective application of polygon-fill technology makes *Sports Simulated Boxing* (Brøderbund/IBM PC) stand out from the genre's classic pugilistic programs. *SSB* packs a knockout graphics punch. Besides a stirring animated introduction, it boasts nine user-adjustable perspectives and instant replay with VCR-like control features. One or two participants can control individually modeled boxers or generate a new one and guide him through an entire ring career.

*Bo Jackson Baseball*, the enhanced editions of ABC's *Monday Night Football* and *Dream Team* (Data East/IBM PC) were originally planned for 1990 publication. Design changes delayed their appearance, but all should be available by this summer. These are slick action-strategy games built around a similar premise. The user employs the controller to enter on-field decisions and guide the movements of statistically influenced replicas of actual professional athletes.

*Dream Team* has undergone the biggest change, though it actually had the smoothest development cycle. One

change was a late-in-the-game substitution of Joe Dumars for James Worthy. The slick ball-handling teams with Patrick Ewing and Dominique Wilkins against the computerists' team in this three-on-three contest.

If current team athletics aren't enough, try the sexiest sport of the future, *Rollerbabes* (Cinemaware/Amiga, IBM PC). It's a wacky mix of skateboarding, roller derby, wrestling and cheesecake, in which the Rollerbabes compete against a roster of suitably grotesque teams with names like the Erasure Heads, the Buzz Cuts and the Fabulous Pig Brothers. It's semi-risqué fun for some of the family!

Six race courses allow computerists to tread in the footsteps of an automotive legend in *Mario Andretti's Racing Challenge* (Electronic Arts/Amiga, IBM PC). This is the racing equivalent of *Earl Weaver*, with Mario himself there to give strategy hints. Andretti's favorite courses, from Ascot Park to Monte Carlo, are shown in breathtaking graphics. The cars even raise realistic puffs of dust on the dirt tracks.

*Bill Elliot's NASCAR Challenge* (Konami/Amiga, IBM PC, Macintosh) puts the player at the wheel of hot cars like a custom-built Thunderbird, Grand Prix or Lumina. Bit-mapped graphics create finely detailed artwork for six NASCAR tracks in this rousing stock car racing simulation.

As the younger brother of the hero of *Street Rod*, the player cruises three new courses in *Street Rod II* (California Dreams/Amiga, IBM PC). The Los Angeles Aqueduct, Mulholland Drive and Grudge Night at the raceway provide a lot of opportunity to put a customized car through its paces.



#### PATHWAYS TO ADVENTURE

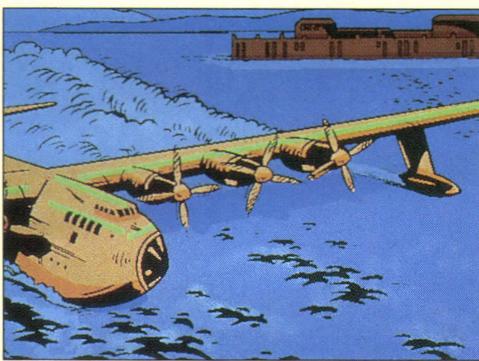
There'll be plenty of new adventure games this year, especially science fiction, fantasy and mystery.

Sequels are the lifeblood of this category. Publishers like to capitalize on a hit with sequels, because of the high initial-development cost and time for the first program. When a series gets hot, as Roberta Williams' and Lord British's epics have, orders soar into the stratosphere. *King's Quest V*, for example, went into distribution with over 250,000 units ordered. That lets Sierra On-Line spend heavily on development, which results in steadily improving art, sound and interface.

*Might & Magic III* (New World Computing/IBM PC) is the most noteworthy series title of those due this summer. The latest version of this icon-driven interface is a big improvement on the original and makes this blend of dungeon and overland questing detailed, yet easy to learn and play. There are action games, including a joust, to increase the excitement level.

The *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* series takes an exciting new direction in *Eye of the Beholder* (Strategic Simulations/Amiga, IBM PC). The first computer game to utilize TSR, Inc., Second Edition rules set, *Eye of the Beholder* is also the first to present its fantasy role-playing action in first-person perspective.

*Death Knights of Krynn* (Strategic Simulations/Amiga, IBM PC) is a sequel to last year's *Champions of Krynn*. The new tale begins a year after the conclusion of the first story and concerns the battle against the undead Sir Karl,



Top: Sierra On-Line's *Kings Quest V*. Right: Tiger Media's *Airwave Adventure*.

who has stolen a Dragonlance.

A treat for younger adventurers will arrive during the fall. Work is just starting on *Fairytales Adventure II* (New World Computing/IBM PC), but it promises to be similar to the 1989 change-of-pace hit.

*Twilight 2000* (Paragon Software/IBM PC) is an overhead-perspective computer edition of the Games Designers Workshops nonelectronic science fiction role-playing game. Characters created with the icon-driven generator try to survive and complete adventures in post-World War III Poland.

Victorian science fiction enthusiasts have a feast awaiting them. *Martian Dreams* (Origin Systems/Amiga, IBM PC), the second title in the *Worlds of Ultima* series, is a romp with some of the most famous names of the late 19th century. It won't be easy to foil Rasputin's nefarious schemes, but some of the greatest minds of his era are ready to go to the moon, if necessary, to stop the Russian madman.

*In Planet's Edge: The Point of No Return* (New World Computing/IBM PC),

an alien spaceship sends the whole Earth into a rift in space, and the mission in this combination of action and adventure is to visit the 60 worlds and complete the mini-quests on each. The real-time space shoot-out sequence guarantees plenty of arcade-style thrills.

Revolutionary China of the 1930s is the setting for *Heart of China* (Dynamix/IBM PC), a high adventure for home computers. The computerist becomes "Lucky" Jake Masters. Using point-and-click commands, Jake tries to rescue the kidnapped daughter of a wealthy American. The artwork has a unique look, much more shadowy and atmospheric than most adventure titles. The cinematic presentation is further enlivened by real-time action sequences at important points in the story.

In early 1990, Accolade electrified critics with sneak peeks at a thriller that employed 100% digitized artwork. Delays have prevented *Conspiracy: The Deadlock File* (Accolade/IBM PC) from coming out before this summer, but the long wait has not dimmed its visual intensity. It's tough and gritty work,

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being a New York City private eye and *Conspiracy: The Deadlock File* fills screen after intense screen with powerful graphic images. Framed for the murder of a CIA agent, the player has only one day to ferret out the true culprit and stop an international plot to take over the entire world.

### SPOTLIGHT ON STRATEGY

Unusually clever kinetic puzzles furnish the challenge in *3-D Blast* (Data East/Amiga, IBM PC). The player's on-screen character is a ball. A movable paddle aims the ball at play features to execute the sequence of movements needed to open the portal and bounce the ball through it to freedom—and the next room.

*Pick 'n' Pile* (Ubi Soft/Amiga, Apple II, Atari ST, Commodore 64, IBM PC, Macintosh) is more similar to several other kinetic-strategy titles introduced in the last three years. Colored balls drop from the sky and must be placed in piles according to hue to make them vanish.

The best way to label *Arachnophobia* (Disney Software/Amiga, IBM PC) is that it's an electronic board game derived from the 1990 comedy-adventure movie. When spiders overtake a neighborhood, you must destroy the egg sacks in a house-to-house search and hunt down the queen. The graphics are exceptional; fully worthy of the Disney name.

More serious in intent is *Armada 2525* (Interstel/Amiga, IBM PC), a multi-

worlds. The setting is very detailed, with six classes of stars and five categories of planets.

Nothing less awesome than the history of mankind is the subject of *Civilization* (MicroProse/Amiga, IBM PC). Sid Meier, author of 1990's *Railroad Tycoon*, starts the player as a member of a nomadic tribe in 4000 B.C.

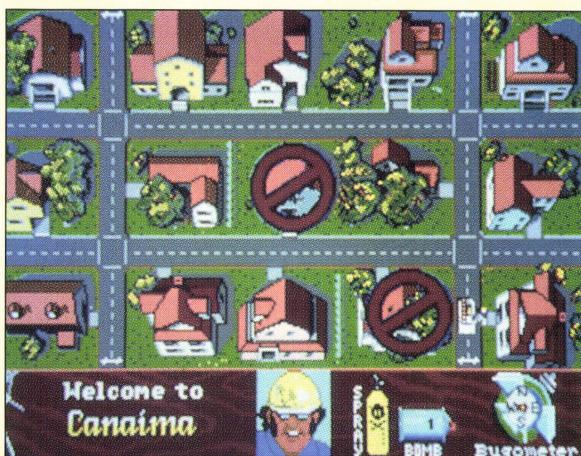
**Top: MicroProse's Gunship 2000.**

**Middle: Brøderbund's Red Baron.**

**Bottom: Disney's Arachnophobia.**



The goal is to lead that tribe forward in an effort to establish a fully integrated modern culture. Despite the tremendous scope of play, Meier promises that computerists will be able to



player science fiction strategy game. As the leader of an entire race, the player tries to expand off the home planet by fighting enemies in space and on alien

learn quickly and enter play experience without frustrating hunts for obscure rules.

*Deluxe Battle Chess* (Interplay/IBM PC) is intended as the answer to complaints by chess purists that *Battle Chess* looks great but has mediocre playability. This edition incorporates the esteemed *Checkmate* algorithms for the robot adversary, so that *Battle Chess II* will now strategize as well as any home-computer chess program on the market.

*Cruise for Corpse* (Interplay/Amiga, IBM PC), developed by Delphine Software (best known for *James Bond*:

*Stealth Affair*), is a shipboard murder mystery. Large-size graphics and very atmospheric illustrations create the perfect mood for searching for clues and interrogating suspects.

Everyone can go to the castle of dreams in *Castles* (Interplay/IBM PC). This authentic simulation of medieval life laces the strategy with enough role-playing elements to allow the user to get completely caught up in building and running one or more castles.

Once a castle is finished, keeping it running while fulfilling your feudal duties requires tricky maneuvering. Those who want something less realistic, but more colorful can also use the optional magic spells.

*Lexi Cross* (Interplay/IBM PC) turns the gamer into a player in a game show. The on-screen contestant turns tiles to find hidden words and then figure out what the common theme of all the words is. Play is against the computer opponent, face to face or by teams. It also features a built-in calendar with graphics that illustrate the changing seasons—and it even wishes the player a happy birthday when the date comes.

### THE FORECAST

The next year will be strange, even in light of computer gaming's mercurial history. A further decline in quantity is a likely consequence of the anticipated introduction of CD-based software coming next year. Another possible result is that some publishers will release products as conventional computer games that really need CD equipment in order to perform as the designer intended.

No worries exist about product quality. A few companies still cling to the "do it cheap and quick" philosophy that hurt the business in 1989, but they are exceptions. Most new games will be as good or better than the ones in our collections, and what gamer would ask for more, or be satisfied with less? 

Jamie Bunker  
Professional Gamer

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# COMPUTER GAME REVIEWS

## Rise of the Dragon: A Blade Hunter Mystery

DYNAMIX

Versions: Amiga (\$49.99),  
IBM PC (\$49.99)

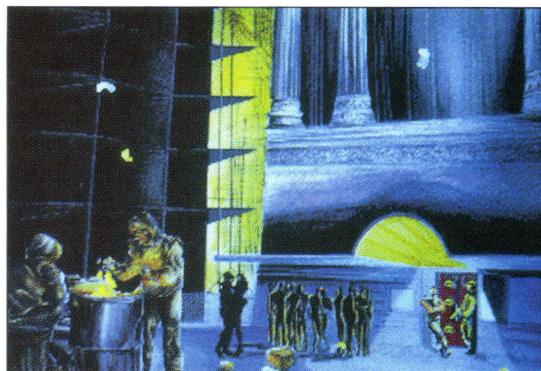
SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

William "Blade" Hunter is a hard-bitten private eye in the seedy, decaying Los Angeles of the year 2053. He used to be a cop, but his *Dirty Harry*-style public relations won him an early retirement from the force. Now he finds himself up against a danger that makes his usual clientele look positively wholesome: the Dragon, an ancient and extremely malevolent god, is about to return to transform a confused and struggling world into a maelstrom of chaos!

That's the plot of Jeff Tunnell's superb *Rise of the Dragon: A Blade Hunter Mystery*, the first adventure to be developed using the new Dynamix Game Development System (DGDS). Hunter, a character somewhere between Harrison Ford in *Blade Runner* and Marvel Comics' *The Punisher*, makes a great protagonist, and this sleazoid, futuristic L.A. is a rich setting. Add a slick, responsive interface, and you've got a gaming experience as sophisticated as a big-budget sci-fi flick.

*Dragon* uses a streamlined point-and-click "smart cursor" system in which the cursor changes depending on the object or character it overlaps. When the cursor turns into an "exit" icon, for example, it means that left-clicking on this location permits Hunter to enter another room. If a conversation is possible with a character, the icon transforms into a word balloon. And, the cursor changes into a magnifying glass when the object it contacts can be observed in greater detail. Otherwise, manipulation and operation of objects and interaction with other characters is simplicity itself.

The game also includes a pair of side-scrolling arcade sequences, complete with a "boss" at the end. These contests are not the



*Rise of the Dragon* is an extremely entertaining state-of-the-art adventure, but contains rough language and adult situations.

strongest part of the game, having been oversimplified to an unnecessary degree. Weapons and punch selection are all made by the computer, for example, removing what could have been a meaningful strategic component from the game. Fortunately, Dynamix includes its famous "VCR" feature first seen in *David Wolf, Secret Agent*; it allows the user to adjust difficulty, replay or even eliminate the Arcade sequences entirely.

Some of *Rise of the Dragon*'s most impressive design innovations include characters who remember what Hunter says and does to them, then act accordingly. Also remarkable is

the use of cinematic "mean-while" sequences, in which the camera cuts away to some important action occurring elsewhere in the real-time story line. Even more intriguing is the fact that just because the player is privy to some piece of information, it doesn't mean that Hunter is. Author Tunnell refers to this "disparity of awareness" in the excellent documentation and feels it "will become a hallmark of the

rapidly evolving genre of interactive storytelling."

*Rise of the Dragon* is an extremely entertaining adult (including some rough language and situations) adventure wrapped in the rapidly expanding envelope of state-of-the-art computer gaming. Beautiful sound and graphics, intelligent design and a solid script help to create the most compelling adventure universe since Westwood's *Circuit's Edge*. Highly recommended.

—Bill Kunkel

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## Freakin' Funky Fuzzballs

SIR-TECH

Versions: IBM PC (\$29.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

What do we have here? An arcade-strategy game from Sir-Tech. Next we'll be get-

ting hex-grid war games from Psygnosis and side-scrolling arcade shoot-'em-ups from SSI, right?

There's certainly no law that says a publisher can't explore new ground; sometimes it can be very healthy. But when Sir-Tech, a company best known for fantasy RPGs like *Wizardry*, puts out a top-down maze-chase game starring what look like Tribbles in baseball caps, it's only normal for expectations to be high. After all, imagine an arcade-strategy game so compelling that Sir-Tech felt they had to publish it!

Alas, *Freakin' Funky Fuzzballs*, by Ian Currie and Robert Koller, is generic, if entertaining, stuff. The action begins on a gridlike playfield consisting of 11 x 12 gray blocks. Stepping on one of these blocks turns it light gray; stepping on it a second time turns it blue and a final contact turns it into a black space that cannot be traversed except with a magic wand.

Wands are uncovered when the player-character steps onto the brick under which they are hidden. They breach the black voids and allow the Fuzzballs, as well as a potpourri of other bonus objects, to pass over them. Eventually, the player must collect all the keys secreted about each play field, then find the door and escape, pursued the entire time by a guardian, whose touch drains the Fuzzball's vitality and eventually kills it.

There are only 15 levels in the entire game, which doesn't seem like very many, but at least the higher levels contain different types of bonus items. A more serious problem is represented by the graphics, which are flat, dully colored and altogether unattractive.

The game's silly title makes much of the player-characters being cute, round Fuzzballs. But since the game is rendered entirely in a top-down perspective, it reduces the characters to nothing more than blue and yellow blobs. Moreover, there is nothing interesting or unique about these creatures; they don't jump, they don't roll or gobble or split in two! They could just as easily have been human beings or game markers for all the identity they bring to the party.

*Freakin' Funky Fuzzballs* is an entertaining kinetic puzzle contest with dumpy graphics and a catchy sound track. It's just a shame that Sir-Tech's first foray into a new genre couldn't be more auspicious.

—B.K.

Sir-Tech Software  
P.O. Box 245  
Ogdensburg, NY 13669  
(315) 393-6451

## Elvira

### ACCOLADE

**Versions:** Amiga (\$59.95),  
IBM PC (\$59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

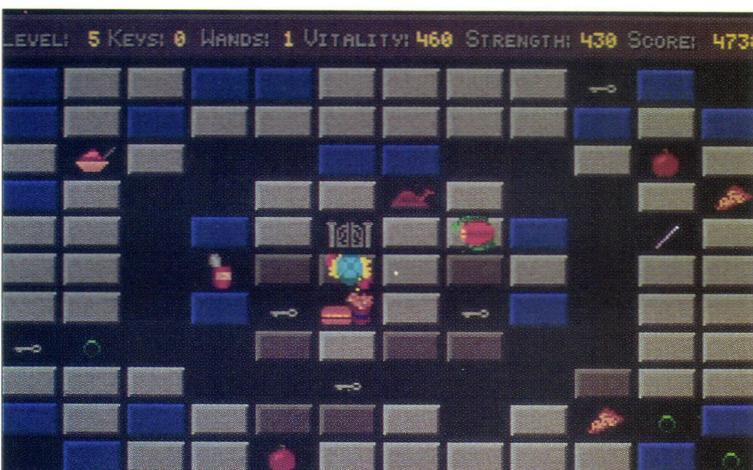
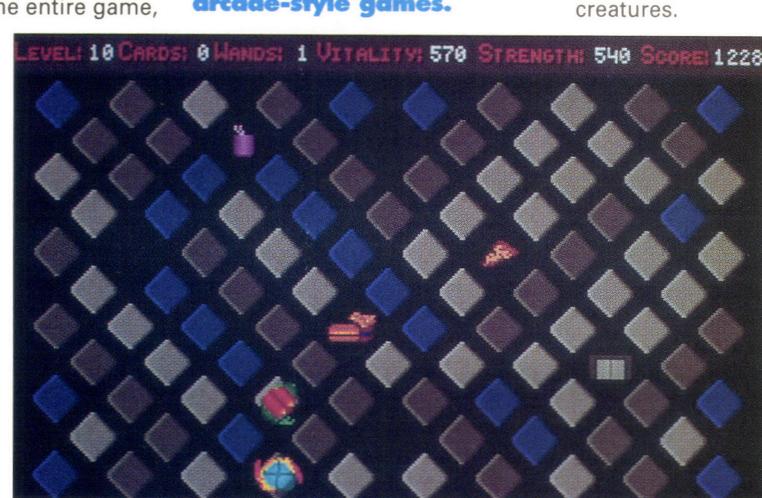
The gratitude of the bewitching Elvira awaits anyone who survives a trip through Killbragant castle in this menu- and icon-driven adventure. Elvira's efforts to restore the castle have disturbed her grandmother, Emelda the Evil, whose powers have unleashed a plague of undead creatures on Elvira's home. Emelda wants to return from the dead, along with hundreds of her monstrous minions, and retake possession of the family manor.

The player is a computer freak who is the only one foolhardy enough to answer Elvira's ad soliciting help. After a duel against the bloodthirsty swordsman who guards the gate, the player explores the multilevel castle in search of the seven keys needed to defeat Emelda. Almost every room features an interactive horror scene in which the player must use brains, fighting ability and spells to triumph over vampires, gremlins and other evil creatures.

Two large windows dominate the play screen. The large upper window shows a first-person view of the current location, while the smaller lower one presents text messages, inventory and weapons. A status line located between the two windows monitors the adventurer's six characteristics: strength, resilience, dexterity, skill, life and experience. Though all these attributes affect game play, life is the most crucial. If it drops to zero, the character dies, and the game invites the computerist to begin the quest over again.

Two movement systems, both simple, speed the course of play. The gamer can click a direction arrow located to the left of the windows

*continued on page 90*



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or click on a spot on the first-person display. A short menu in the upper-left corner of the screen gives access to objects in rooms, inventory and weapons. A menu in the upper-right corner lists common commands like "examine," "open" and "use." Below that is the menu for pausing, saving and retrieving games.

Combat is frequent and bloody. A menu replaces the command menu when it's time to fight. Killbragant has weapons lying around for the taking, but finding one isn't enough. The adventurer must gain skill with it. This usually means using the weapon in combat, though it is possible to practice archery in the appropriate area of the castle.

*Elvira* has two combat systems. The user can click on the main display or the combat menu. The computer determines whether the player's character is in a defensive or offensive posture, based on the accuracy of the last blow. The player has two possible tactics in each mode; block and parry on defense or lunge and hack on offense. Indicators monitor the number of hit points of damage inflicted on each participant.

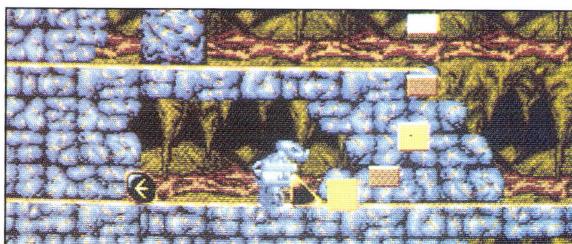
Use of magic is handled ingeniously. The player collects ingredients needed to mix a spell and brings them to Elvira in the kitchen. She concocts the spells, which then become part of the player's inventory. Chasing after a bunch of ingredients may sound like extra work, but it is impossible to win *Elvira* without magical power.

The British team that previously did *Personal Nightmare* (Horror Soft) shows it learned a lot from its first journey into the macabre and applied it to the second. *Elvira*'s beautiful artwork, shocking animated sequences and saving touches of humor are major improvements over *Personal Nightmare*. Now is definitely the time to come to the aid of the Mistress of the Dark.

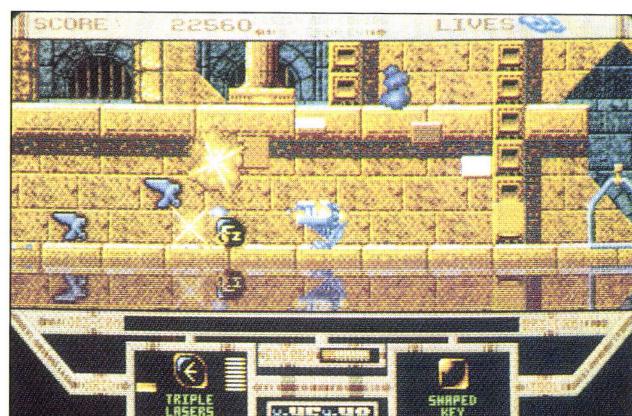
—Arnie Katz

Accolade  
550 S. Winchester Blvd., Suite 200  
San Jose, CA 95128  
(408) 985-1700

**Horror Soft, which previously did *Personal Nightmare*, has made some noteworthy improvements in *Elvira*.**



**In *The Killing Game Show*, by Psygnosis, users play as contestants on a futuristic TV game show in which the only reward is saving your own life.**



## The Killing Game Show

### PSYGNOSIS

**Versions: Amiga (\$44.99), Atari ST (\$44.99)**

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Psygnosis' *The Killing Game Show* stars a criminal as its main character. The unfortunate frail one chosen to play this futuristic TV game show has only one reward in mind...saving his life!

There are 16 pits of death awaiting, each one more difficult than the last. The object of the game is to find the correct route up and out of each pit. During play the gamer will be confronted with all sorts of deadly enemies. The show's hosts provide our hero with robotic body part replacements, including a metallic skin that is obviously more protective and allows the inexperienced contestant to survive for at least a little while.

Players are limited to a certain amount of time to escape a pit. The time limit is enforced by a fluid called DOLL (deadly to organic life liquid), which rapidly fills the hole. Naturally, contact with DOLL is deadly.

*The Killing Game Show* is actually a hybrid of the platform genre, with 16-bit graphics (including excellent parallax scrolling) to spruce up the basic run-jump-shoot action. Even though there initially seems to be little depth to the contest, it is brought off with such panache that it's totally addictive. One of the main reasons for this is that even after all lives are lost, a player can continue from the same level in which he met his demise. Another is the progression of difficulty, which is smooth and gradual, not in the least bit frustrating to a rookie.

The adventure aspects raise *The Killing Game Show* above simple platform games. To advance

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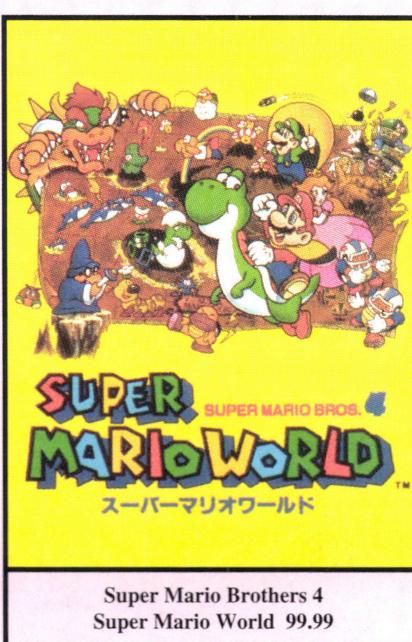
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through solid walls, the player must find the correct key. Most of these are hidden in natural rock "caskets" that must be blasted open. Each key has a distinct shape and fits only the corresponding lock.

The two-disk set can access both drives, and the top-ten scores are saved to Disk B. If they had only provided for "password reentry," all would have been right with the world. As it stands, *The Killing Game Show* is not only a beautiful game, but it also measures well in the ultimate gamers' test: It is FUN!

—Frank Eva

Psygnosis  
29 St. Mary's Court  
Brookline, MA 02146  
(617) 731-3553

## Spirit of Excalibur

VIRGIN MASTERTRONIC

**Versions:** Amiga (\$49.99),  
Apple IIGS (\$49.99), IBM PC (\$49.99),  
Macintosh (\$49.99)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

*Spirit of Excalibur*, an action game with role-playing elements, is set in the year 539 in Arthurian England, right after the death of King Arthur. Gamers take the role of Lord Constantine, Arthur's successor as leader of the Knights of the Round Table. The game follows the traditional storyline in almost perfect detail, from the legacy of Arthur's bastard son Mordred to the enchanted knights of the forest Sauvage.

Players must get from York to Camelot to claim the throne. All travel is handled via the scrolling map of southern England. Heraldic shields representing opposing, allied and neutral forces appear on the map and move independently along their journeys. Icons may be clicked to view stats and other relevant information and can also be magnified for a closer look at each situation.

While traveling the map, which is where 70% of the game is played, dialogue boxes deliver encounter announcements, status reports and even some surprises from time to time. Play switches to scene level upon reaching a town or encountering an enemy.

Action combat happens at the scene level. Here, the gamer can watch passively as the computer battles or handle it on his or her own. In individual combat, players choose from two attack swings, a parry or a spell. Army combat is similar except gamers issue commands to forces rather than individuals. These orders include use of special items gathered along the way, as well as magic and maneuvering options.

*Spirit of Excalibur* is set apart from other

*Spirit of Excalibur* successfully blends action with role-playing elements.



games of this sort by the reality of the storyline and its successful blend of action with role-playing. The map level is not boring as it often is in games of this type, partially because of the outstanding visuals. They're in true VGA and must be seen in order to truly appreciate them. The action scenes are easy enough to control yet offer enough options to make each encounter a challenge. The ability to ignore the battle and let the computer fight is a nice touch.

Along with the battles and exploration, the game contains the most important elements of Dungeons & Dragons. Players must watch hit and magic points and figure ways to replenish them as necessary. There are many puzzles to solve along the way as well as mysterious objects to help or hinder play.

The game is both very challenging and beautiful to look at, especially on the scene level. The animation is incredibly smooth and each command offers players new and exciting visual possibilities. Although the instructions state the game will run on all CPUs, it is recommended for play on a 80286 or better for top enjoyment. A mouse is also desirable; the command set is icon-based and tricky to operate without. Finally, if players have a sound board, they're in for a real musical treat.

—Frank Tetro, Jr.

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## Interceptor

STRATEGIC SIMULATIONS

**Versions:** Amiga (\$59.95),  
IBM PC (\$59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

*Interceptor* is a complex tactical space-combat simulator set in the 69th century. It requires a significant degree of commitment to play well, but if you like simulations, this one is quite good.

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The scenario for *Interceptor* is a familiar one, a star empire is expanding into regions that are not happy about it. Its most unusual aspect is that the player can take either side—the Imperial Terran Overlord Government (TOG) or the Commonwealth that opposes it.

The first level of complexity in *Interceptor* comes when building a squadron of pilots. The game comes with TOG and Commonwealth squadrons already on the disk, and these can be augmented by any number of customized squadrons. When selecting a pilot, options include race (several alien races are available) and sex. These choices determine such important factors as aggressiveness, dexterity with space craft and ability to withstand injury, traits that are measured and set for each pilot created.

Next, the squadron must be equipped with ships. Each pilot starts with a certain quota of "prestige points," which are used to buy equipment. Needless to say, there aren't enough to buy much of a ship. In fact, of the 24 ship types available, new pilots can only afford the cheapest one.

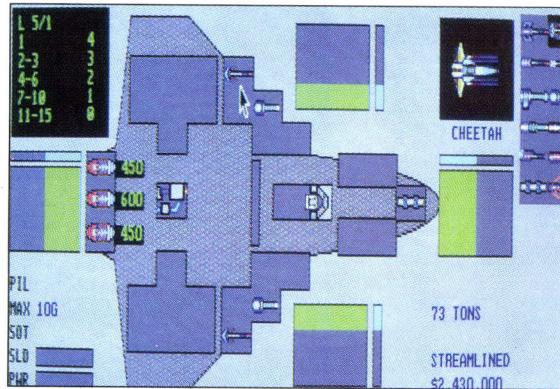
As they gain mission experience (provided they survive), they earn more points, good for either adding options or buying a more powerful ship.

The ships are described on cards included in the game package. Each is rated for mass, engine power, shield strength, armor and basic weaponry, which can be replaced (for a price) with more powerful weapons, missiles and even a turret gunner. This last is very useful, since both wing and nose-mounted weapons only fire in the direction that the ship is facing.

Customizing is done on a separate diagram screen. The player simply clicks with a mouse on an area of the ship (such as the engine) to get information or replaces it with something else.

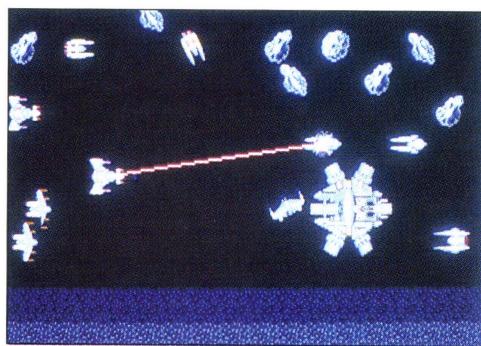
Once the squadron is equipped, combat begins. A variety of missions are available, from simple space combat against an enemy squadron to photoreconnaissance against enemy positions. Space combat is done in two phases, movement and targeting.

During movement, the ship can be turned and the engines fired, resulting in a velocity and direction in space. The physics here are accurate—velocity continues at the same pace until the engines are fired. To slow down requires turning the ship and firing the engines in the opposite direction. Each ship is rated for a maximum thrust, and in combat, the player can actually exceed maximum thrust, although this creates a damage risk. All commands are given through direction arrows and by clicking on up/down arrows to set the thrust.



**SSI's Interceptor is a complex tactical space-combat simulator set in the 69th century.**

After the movement phase, the computer shows which targets are in range within the field of fire of the weapons. After targeting, the actual battle takes place with much laser fire, missile launching and assorted sound effects. Finally, damage assessment signals the end of the round. There are a number of ways to end a battle, including fulfilling the mission (destroying all targets or getting the photographs) or by running, which the manual tactfully calls "disengaging."



The *Interceptor* graphics make no use of VGA capabilities. The space battles are animated in a jerky fashion. Oddly, the advertisements seem to indicate that this is an arcade game—it is not. Except for slightly better graphics, it is similar to a long line of "take your turn" simulations, albeit more complex than most of its predecessors.

Check this out if you enjoy a slow-paced complex simulation of something that won't exist for 49 centuries.

—Dave Plotkin

Strategic Simulations, Inc.  
675 Almanor Drive, Suite 201  
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(408) 737-6800

## Worlds of Ultima: The Savage Empire

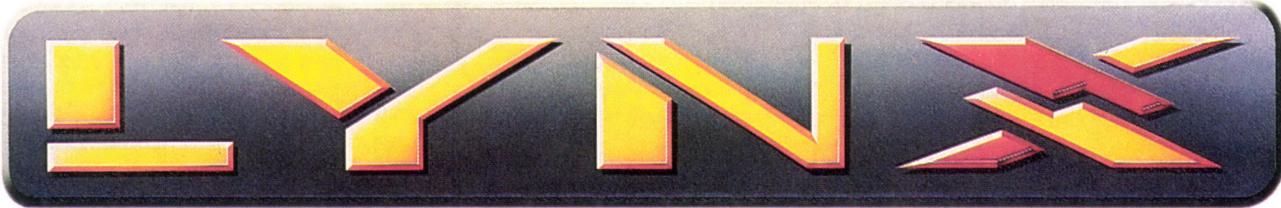
ORIGIN

Versions: IBM PC (\$59.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

When Origin announced the creation of a *Worlds of Ultima* series some time ago, industry insiders were excited but also a little apprehensive. The excitement was natural, as Origin has improved their operating system with each subsequent journey to the land of Britannica. The apprehension arose from feelings that part of the attraction of *Ultima* was the very detailed surroundings. Players would expect any new world to hold the same level of detail as the Britannica of *Ultima VI*, which took years of refinement. Fortunately, Origin provided the Valley of Eodon, a richly developed gaming environment, as the setting for their first release, *The Savage Empire*.

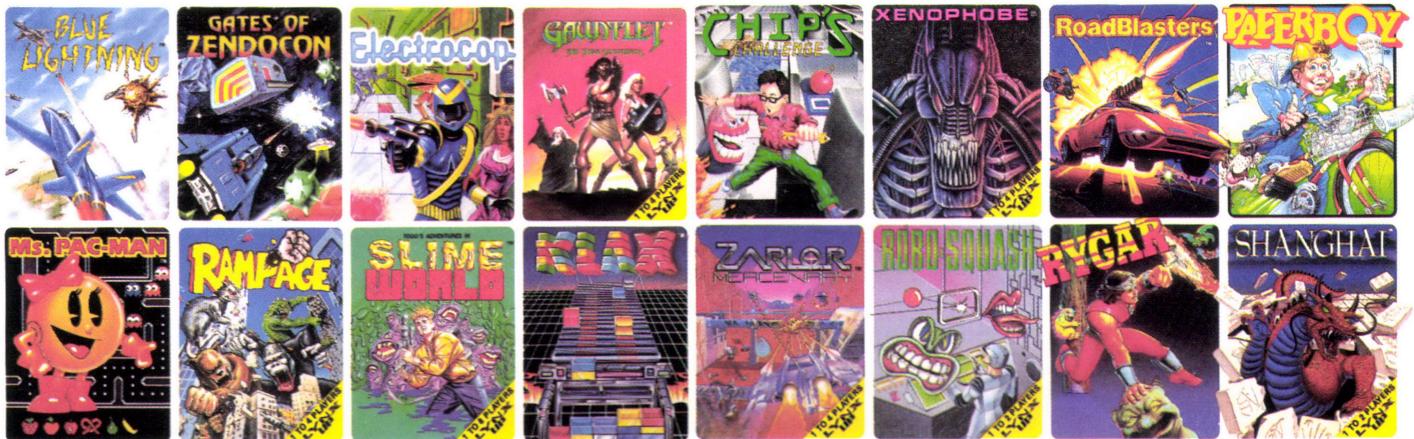
The story begins with the Avatar plagued by dreams of Eodon, a land of primitive tribes, rampaging dinosaurs and a beautiful jungle princess. In search of answers, the player-character seeks out Professor Rafkin, the curator of a local museum. While experimenting



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**Ultima enthusiasts won't be disappointed with the first installment in the *Worlds of Ultima* series.**



with an unusual piece of moonstone, the characters are dramatically transported to Eodon and shortly thereafter the group is separated.

Interaction with NPCs (nonplayer characters) is the central activity required for success, although some combat skills are necessary when dealing with the Myrmidex (insect warriors that are up to no good). The inhabitants of the valley are derivatives of cultures from our past, including, among others, African, Amazon, Aztec and South Sea tribes. To successfully win the game, the player must solve mini-quests for each of the tribes in an effort to unite them in a peaceful coalition to fight the Myrmidex.

Adventuring in Eodon is a joy. Items have weight, can be manipulated to form other objects and are logically distributed (no treasure chests of goodies on random encounters). As an example of the realism and logic incorporated in the environment, if one kills a sabertoothed tiger, the carcass yields a skin that may be used later on.

Inventory items are easily manipulated via a pull-down menu structure that eliminates typing. The magic system is also elegantly simple but effective, involving only nine spells built around the use of totems and offerings. Replenishment supplies of magical elements are available throughout the land, as are many other useful items, which are free for the taking. It is also possible to develop some modern weaponry with the help of Professor Rafkin.

The display is divided into four regions. The map in which players view the party and their immediate surroundings from a three-quarter top-down perspective is the largest. Line of sight restrictions and limited vision at night are automatically incorporated. Along the bottom of the map are point-and-click command icons, which duplicate standard adventuring commands (take, move, etc.). The remainder of the screen holds a status display and message window. Players will find the interface transparent after only short practice. Furthermore, since players can easily jump straight into the program, documentation is reduced to a minimum.

*The Savage Empire* boasts superior VGA graphics. It also has CD quality sound which, unfortunately, many users will not hear, because it requires expanded memory to run.

**Marvel Comics' most popular superhero has been brought to the computer screen in an action-oriented game by Paragon.**

An innovative installation program lets players select whether to save space on the hard disk by leaving files compressed until needed or save time during play by expanding all files during installation. Additions such as this reflect Origin's continued commitment to attempt to meet customer needs and desires, before even they anticipate them. As such, this latest installment should be considered indispensable.

—Ed Dille

Origin Systems, Inc.  
P.O. Box 161750  
Austin, TX 78716  
(512) 328-0282

## The Amazing Spider-Man

PARAGON SOFTWARE

**Versions: Amiga (\$39.95),  
Commodore 64 (\$29.95),  
IBM PC (\$34.95)**

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

*The Amazing Spider-Man* is the first of the Paragon games to feature the most popular Marvel character in his own computer game. Previously Paragon had teamed Spidey with Captain America in *The Amazing Spider-Man* and *Captain America in Doctor Doom's Revenge*. Both Spideys are arcade games, but the newer one requires a little bit of thought from the player in order to progress from room to room.

*The Amazing Spider-Man* is weak on sound. There just isn't much beyond beeps and bonks. If only Paragon had obtained the theme from the old cartoon series or put in some more music throughout the game, they could have kept people sitting at the computer longer to play the game. Silence is deadly in the realm of modern computer entertainment.

The easy game play more than makes up for the lack of auditory pleasures. The player moves Spidey through Rockwell Studios to save alter ego Peter Parker's wife Mary Jane Parker, recently kidnapped by his enemy Mys-





terio. Mysterio took Parker's wife in order to lure Spidey into the studios on this rescue mission.

The player manipulates Spidey through a side view of the current room to activate switches and levers that open up different parts of the room, doors and other openings. Spidey's range of movements is the most intriguing part of the game. He swings from webs that are attached to the ceiling, shoots webs to stun enemies, climbs the walls and (best of all) walks on all



of the walls and ceiling just like in the comics.

The graphics in *The Amazing Spider-Man* are very simplistic. Aside from the opening sequence and the large drawing of Spidey on the right side of the monitor (which turns to a skeleton as the player accumulates damage), the screens are all shown in third-person perspective. However, these meager scenes are supplemented by the variety of rooms, traps to be deactivated and puzzles to solve.

Unfortunately, there is no save-game feature. However, there are checkpoints along the way where the player can return should Spidey die.

Although this is not the ultimate *Spider-Man* game of which the comics fans dream, it is certainly fun. It should bring out the Spidey in anybody. Some of the rooms in the game are real wacky, especially the gravity ones, and *The Amazing Spider-Man* has enough variety to keep a joystick busy. Best of all, the box features art by current favorite *Spider-Man* artist Todd MacFarlane!

—Russ Ceccola

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# GAWING

## CES CONFIDENTIAL

by Arnie Katz

**Writer, editor, lecturer and game designer Arnie Katz knows the field from every perspective. Each month, his column takes readers inside the world of video and computer games. Arnie attended the 1991 Winter Consumer Electronics Show and files this report from the cutting edge of electronic gaming.**

Will Thrive?" Bob Faber (NEC), Ken Balthaser (Sega), Bob Jacob (Cinemaware) and Louis Castle (Westwood Associates) drew one of the largest crowds ever seen at a CES games-oriented seminar. Fire marshals turned away a huge overflow audience.

It wasn't only because all four are outstanding executives with valued opinions. The topic itself seemed to crystallize a lot of the issues swirling

through the industry right now.

The panel's unanimous opinion was that video and computer games can coexist successfully because they serve different segments of the electronic-gaming community. The video game has conquered the living room, while the computer has become the domain of older, more solitary players who enjoy their gaming at a station, in the home office or den.

The quartet of experts felt they were on shakier ground when it came to predicting the impact of CD technology. They shocked the crowd by unequivocally stating that the CD system capable of generating mass acceptance is not on the market yet, nor even in an advanced stage of development.

They identified data-transmission speed as the "fly" in the CD ointment. All current and announced systems are billed as compatible with audio CD and CD+G (CD plus graphics).

This is one instance in which excessive standardization causes electronic-gaming problems. Usually it's the *lack* of compatibility that drives players to distraction. The problem: CD drive speed, which is sufficient for sound code, is much too slow to support the full-motion video images that many consider a requirement if CD games are going to win the hearts of the mass market.

The answer, according to the panel, is to create a "new standard" for exclusive use with CD software. Technology currently exists that will

**V**eterans of the biannual Consumer Electronics Shows know that more than geography, season and climate distinguish the two mammoth events from each other. The summer edition, held in Chicago during the first week of June, furnishes an exciting advance look at the next holiday season. The exhibits and suites overflow with half-completed super-games intended to amaze the world during the all-important fourth quarter.

The winter edition of CES, staged in Las Vegas each January, is a different matter. Almost always, new games are either weeks from commercial release or little more than a few tantalizing blurbs about an exciting concept or well-known license.

Most computer- and video-game companies don't release a lot of new titles between February and May. That's the time of year for filling out the catalogue with additional SKUs (stock keeping units) and trying to work off excess inventory.

As a result, my Winter CES report generally focuses on trends and new directions, rather than the next six months of new products. It is the time for publishers (confidence boosted to the stratosphere by holiday season sales reports) to dream expansive dreams—and for retailers and distributors to decide which ones will actually have a chance to come true.

I moderated a panel at the WCES called "Video, Computer and CD Games: Which Will Survive and Which

allow for an increase of 400% in CD data-transmission rates. This would allow graphics to be on a par with video-taped broadcasts and TV shows.

Despite this cautionary analysis, most major computer- and video game manufacturers are striving to expand into multimedia companies. Two years ago, most companies made video games or computer games, seldom both. Aside from Cinemaware, Dynamix and Sierra On-Line, the companies with the most CD experience were specializing in only that medium.

Most of the major publishers and many of the smaller ones are taking a more comprehensive approach to entertainment. While recognizing the differences among computer, video, handheld and coin-op games, they are trying to become representative in as many areas of electronic gaming as possible. Here are some examples of this cross-fertilization:

- Konami has greatly expanded its software division and will port many of its video games to the Amiga and IBM PC within the next year.

- MicroLeague Sports Association, MicroProse and Virgin Mastertronic have all targeted the arcades. MLSA and MicroProse have done coin-op versions of popular computer games, while Virgin Mastertronic works on the quarter-snatcher first and then does the disk.

- NEC will introduce a vastly improved version of its TurboGrafx-CD system this fall. Sega and Nintendo are reportedly working on CD peripherals for their 16-bit systems.

- Most of the leading computer software outfits have started video-game cartridge lines. These include: Accolade, Electronic Arts, Sierra On-Line and Software Toolworks.

- Access, Britannica, Dynamix, Interplay, Mediagenic, Origin and Sierra On-Line are just a few of the

well-known computer software developers working on CD games for one or more systems.

Nintendo's decision to eliminate exclusivity clauses in its software-licensing contracts (retroactively and in the future) caused a major upheaval at CES. Exclusivity largely eliminated multisystem publishing in the video-game field by preventing a third-party licensee from transferring an authorized NES cartridge to a rival system. Companies had to make a choice: do the game for Nintendo and no one else, or do it for one or more of the less popular brands. Since the NES owns 90% of the U.S. market, economic reality made creating games strictly for the NES the only viable course of action.

Nintendo's announcement opened the floodgates, and suddenly people were scurrying around the show trying to sell newly acquired rights derived from formerly exclusive NES cartridges.

The elimination of NES exclusivity also gave those negotiating the rights for as-yet-unpublished games increased latitude in negotiations. No longer must the creators of a new video game choose between Nintendo and the rest of the world.

The combined effect of cross-media publishing and nonexclusivity is sure to have major repercussions for all of electronic gaming. The impact will be felt as soon as this coming Christmas, and it's likely to become more pronounced in 1992.

The net result will be a tremendous upsurge in cross-system electronic-game publishing. Within the next year, the vast majority of new designs will be available on all video-game consoles, CD systems and home computers.

This is wonderful news for the emerging hobby of electronic-gaming fandom and for every gamer. The rationale for fandom is that all

electronic gamers share a common interest, regardless of the equipment they own.

It's hard to debate the philosophical truth of gamers' common ground, but making it work on a practical level hasn't been easy for the last couple of years. Anyone with an Amiga or IBM PC has access to 90% of all computer-entertainment programs. The graphics may be a little different from system to system, and sometimes publishers add minor frills, but the games are similar enough that most computerists can discuss them meaningfully.

The video-game universe is the exact opposite. Few titles are offered on more than one system. The NES player has a different cartridge library than a Genesis or TurboGrafx-16 owner. Cross-system publishing will demolish that wall.

Multisystem games are easier to promote. Normally, it's not feasible to hawk an Amiga title in major magazines or on network TV. Only a tiny segment of those audiences have the right gear, so the high advertising costs are not merited by the few potential buyers. However, if the game is also available on IBM PC, Game Boy, Genesis, Lynx, Macintosh, NES and TurboGrafx-16, a big percentage of the mass-media audience *will* have some kind of hardware in their possession.

All-system publishing spreads development costs over more products. This cross-collateralizing protects the publisher's investment. It also enables companies to bid higher for licenses, designers and developers.

The bottom line is that electronic gaming is heading into a hot period for players. Forces are coming together to produce a bumper crop of state-of-the-art super-games. Quantity may continue to take a beating, but electronic gamers will have a feast of high-quality titles in 1991. 

What are the questions that try gamers' souls? Which enigmas leave them tossing and turning, unable to sleep, tortured by doubt? Why, the following questions, of course! And, since we have so many queries to answer this month, let's leap right into the pile.

#### question

Has there ever been a fully animated, completely digitized computer or video game? If not, are there any in the works? Also, is it harder for a computer or video game system to produce digitized graphics or computer-generated graphics?

—Eric Frisbie  
Gaithersburg, Maryland

#### answer

Several games have made extensive use of digitized graphics, most notably *David Wolf: Secret Agent* (Dynamix) and *Mean Streets* (Access). Also, *MicroLeague Wrestling* uses exclusive digitized graphics to reproduce the antics of the World Wrestling Federation. The latter is the only game the Doc knows of that uses digitized animation, but it is limited.

It isn't really a question of whether it's "easier" to produce bit-mapped, polygon-fill or digitized graphics; the sole determining factor is memory. Digitized graphics take up tremendous amounts of memory space, making the technique impractical for most projects.

With CD games on the way, however, the first fully animated game employing digitized graphics is probably already in development.

#### question

I just have one question: Why does Nintendo consider other companies inferior? What I am speaking of is how third-party companies must get Nintendo's approval on their games, and if Nintendo doesn't approve, it's nix on the game. Why is Nintendo's opinion



## LIFE'S PROBLEMS MADE SIMPLE

by  
the Game Doctor

better than the companies who make the games? I praise companies like Tengen, Color Dreams, etc. More companies should break away and start producing without approval. Nintendo needs to see the light soon: They aren't any better, they just have a popular system!

—Josh Zinn  
Jacksonville, Oregon

#### answer

First off, Josh, let me say that I believe in the free market, in terms of electronic entertainment or anything else. I believe any publisher should be able to produce any game for any piece of hardware. And you know what? That's pretty much the situation we now have.

Any company that wishes to invest the time and/or money to build or purchase a parallel development system can produce and sell NES software, as Tengen and Color Dreams have demonstrated. Publishers who wish to carry that Nintendo license on their covers, however, must play by Nintendo's rules. And, while I don't believe

Nintendo necessarily plays fair with all of its licensees, I can understand the motivations behind its sometimes high-handed policies.

The folks at Nintendo went into the video-game business with eyes open at a time when no American company was willing to take that risk, fully remembering the lessons of the 1984 shakeout. The Nintendo brain trust felt it was necessary to the survival of the NES for them to control the flow of software, lest a barrage of low quality product pollute the market, which is what happened to the Atari 2600.

I doubt very much that Nintendo considers other companies "inferior"; I simply think Nintendo believes it knows what's best for its system and wishes to control the product flow to whatever degree it can. To that end, Nintendo developed the famous "lock-out" chip that made it so tough for nonapproved developers to get inside the system.

#### question

Before I ask you my questions, I think I ought to tell you of my situation. I've got an old, rotting Atari 2600 and an aging Commodore 64. The C-64 has served me well, and I'm proud to say I've got a library of over a hundred games for it. However, I've been disturbed by a general trend in computer-game releases.

Usually, new software is for the IBM and compatibles and then I'm held in suspense whether a C-64 version will come out (I gave up a while ago on 2600 versions). Many companies, such as Sierra On-Line, do not make any C-64 [versions]. I'm sure I'm not the only Commodore owner who has stared at a copy of *King's Quest* or *Space Quest* longingly. I need your prognosis, Doc: Is the C-64 dying as a game computer?

I want to stay on the cutting edge of computer games, but I don't know how to go about it. I've already been burned by paying high prices for what I felt were low-quality NES games; and, as far as the IBM goes, I want to

be able to pay for more than one year in college.

Aside from that, here's a technical question for you: A little while ago I borrowed a cartridge for the C-64 called *Star Trek Strategic Operations Simulator* that plugged into the far left slot on the back of the computer. A little while later I heard that SMS cartridges should work in the same slot! Since Sega's marketing in my neighborhood hasn't been that great, I haven't been able to test it. Since you have an unlimited number of guinea pigs, could you find out if this works?

—Pathik Patel  
Sylvania, Ohio



Here's the bad news, Pathik: Wanting to be on the "cutting edge of computer games" while owning a C-64 is not unlike wanting to be on the cutting edge of automotive technology while driving a '63 Rambler. The Rambler was a popular enough vehicle back in the '60s, but it's a relic today. The same status is rapidly approaching for the C-64, which must prepare to join its long-departed cousin, the VIC-20, in the computer version of Valhalla.

Fact is, the cutting edge in computer games is represented by the Microsoft CD-ROM drive for the IBM PC machines. I know it's expensive, but cutting-edge technology generally is. Most major publishers are already moving toward an IBM PC standard. Even the Amiga hasn't caught on the way Commodore hoped, and as I've been telling ST owners for well over a year, that computer isn't even a factor in the American market.

Better brace yourself for a smaller and smaller trickle of C-64 software, especially from major publishers (Sierra, Cinemaware, MicroProse, Brøderbund, Electronic Arts, etc.). A few of the smaller publishers may continue to support the system, since the absence of the major players will make the market more attractive to them. But as for seeing the hottest new games, well, prepare for a lot of longing stares, I'm afraid.

As far as SMS cartridges working in the C-64, that is the wildest rumor I've heard in several months. C-64 and

SMS cartridges aren't remotely the same size, and even if you removed the casing and somehow jammed the video-game board into your C-64 cart slot, the likelihood of it actually working is nonexistent.



I'm at my wit's end. Recently I bought the computer game *Twilight Zone*, which is a First Row program. Much to my dismay, I discovered that the program does not work properly. It seems that the game will end abruptly in a mass of unreadable words. Scenes fly by and almost none of the commands seem to work. When I contacted the place where I had purchased the game, I was told that my computer must not be able to support the program. My computer is a ZEOS 386SX. So, after leaving the store, I realized that I had just thrown almost \$50 into the wind.

When I decided to write the software publisher, I found out that no one could provide the manufacturer's proper address or phone number. Can you help me find out what is going on with this company? If I could get a phone number, or an address for First Row, it would help me in my quest. I'm not doing this to get my money back, I want the game because of the concept but feel like I've been ripped off. Please grant me this request so I can gladly journey into the *Twilight Zone*. Thank you.

—Ronald E. Heinrich  
Freeport, New York



Bad news, Ron, First Row is out of business. However, I'd go back to the software store that sold you the game, since it sounds like you simply have a defective copy. Your system has more than enough memory to run this game properly. When a retail merchant sells a product by a publisher no longer in business, I think he owes it to his customers to support the product.



I was wondering why games are being released in Hong Kong and

Japan before the U.S. I was in Hong Kong in November of 1989 [and] bought *Super Mario Bros. 3*, and in June of 1990 I got *Top Gun II*. I brought them back to Texas and they work. I don't think that it's fair.

—Michael Wang  
Sugarland, Texas



You must remember, Michael, that companies invariably adopt marketing strategies based on the audience they are trying to reach. English computer gamers, for example, have access to many more game titles than American users. On the other hand, the vast majority of those games simply would not sell if brought to this country. Different markets call for different product lines. Believe me, there is no publisher deliberately withholding a game from the U.S. market that it thinks will sell here.



I played *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* in the arcades, and I thought it was the best game I ever played. I wondered where I could buy or order one [and] how much would it cost.

—Greg Blackmore  
Kankakee, Illinois



A quick scan through the latest issue of *RePlay*, the coin-op industry bible, shows two dealers with TMNT machines for sale: R&M Distributing Corp. in West Hempstead, New York, ([800] 229-4FUN) and an unnamed firm conducting a clearance sale (ask for Steven at [609] 263-3277 or Rob at [609] 729-5371). Expect to pay in the neighborhood of \$2,000.

Less wealthy fans of the game can purchase home video game or computer versions that are produced by Konami/Ultra.

And that should finish us up for this month. Next month features the return of the Game Doctor Prize Packet. Remember to send your mail to **Game Doctor, 330 S. Decatur, Suite 152, Las Vegas, NV 89107**.

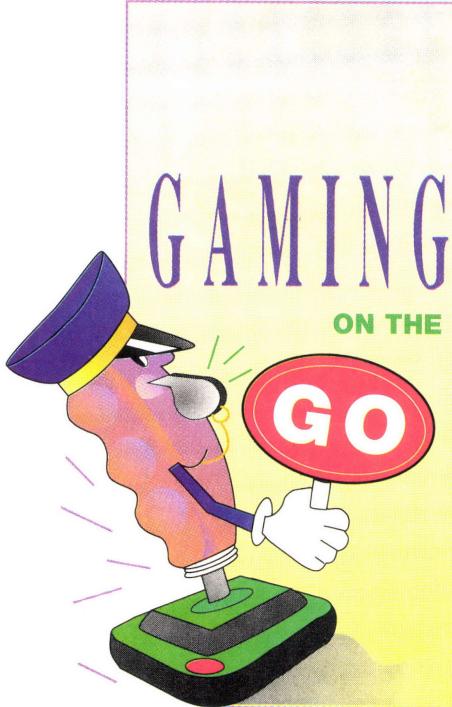
I'm going over 300 kilometers per hour coming down the straightaway, into the turn. I downshift and turn hard to the right, but I've got too much speed. I narrowly avoid hitting a sign on the side of the road and screech back onto the asphalt. Just when I think I've made it, another car practically runs me over. I lose control and smash right into the next sign on the curve. My car careens out of control for an instant, but then I'm off again, like a bat out of...well, anyway, I come charging up behind the bozo who ran me down. I'm coming up on the finish line and I've got to get past—Rats! I wasn't able to overtake him, and so I only placed sixth. Oh well, there's always the next race. I'll show him!

Oh, hi. Sorry, I got carried away there. I'm a little excited because for the first time since I started writing this column, I have an entirely new toy to play with. Since the inception of *Gaming on the Go*, it's been Game Boy and Lynx all the way, and since the TurboExpress plays the same games as the TG-16, there has been no point in my reviewing games for it, since they're covered elsewhere. And, not to complain about those other machines (I like to play them all), but a little change is nice.

And a little change is what I've got. A new cartridge-based handheld system sits next to my computer keyboard as I write this, and it's more than a little difficult to concentrate on typing while the sounds of cars roaring by is tempting me to try another lap. The game is *Super Monaco GP*, and the system I'm playing it on is Sega's new Game Gear.

For those of you who haven't heard of it yet, the Game Gear is Sega's entry into the handheld gaming sweepstakes. A compact unit only slightly larger than a paperback book, it is surprisingly light and easy to handle and features a detachable carrying strap. The Game Gear is matte black with a smooth finish and rounded edges. Visually, it's nice enough, but I'm surprised that it wasn't a little more "stylish."

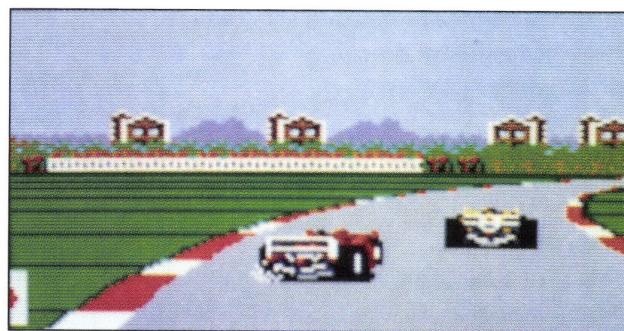
The cartridges, which are slightly larger than those used by the Game Boy and Lynx, fit into a slot at the top-rear of the unit and almost blend into the lines of the case. Cartridge removal and insertion is a breeze,



## GEARING UP FOR NEW GAMES

by

MAURICE MOLYNEAUX



Sega's *Super Monaco GP*, for the new Game Gear, is a high-quality Grand Prix racing game that offers a large variety of race tracks and car-customizing options.

with no doors to open and no switches to move. The unit's primary controls consist of a **START** button, two action buttons (1 and 2) and a conventional joypad. There appears to be no reset function built into the unit, and although programmers could provide such a feature through software—by holding down **START** while pressing both Buttons 1 and 2, for example—

the only way to reset is to turn the machine off and on again, which is more than a little annoying.

As for software compatibility—forget it. The Game Gear is an entirely new system and is not compatible with cartridges produced for either the Sega Master System or Genesis. However, word is that Sega is busily translating many of the titles from those systems, such as *Alex Kidd* and *Afterburner*, to the Game Gear.

As I write this, the machine is not yet on the market, though it should be by the time this sees print. The box my sample unit came in was the Japanese package, and I couldn't make out what it said, therefore I'm not entirely certain of several of the Game Gear's specifications. However, there are some things I do know. The unit's screen is a backlit color LCD display with a graphics resolution of 160 x 146 pixels, reportedly. It can display 32 colors at a time out of a palette of 4,096. The screen, which is approximately the same size as that of the Atari Lynx, is nice and appears slightly sharper than the Lynx's.

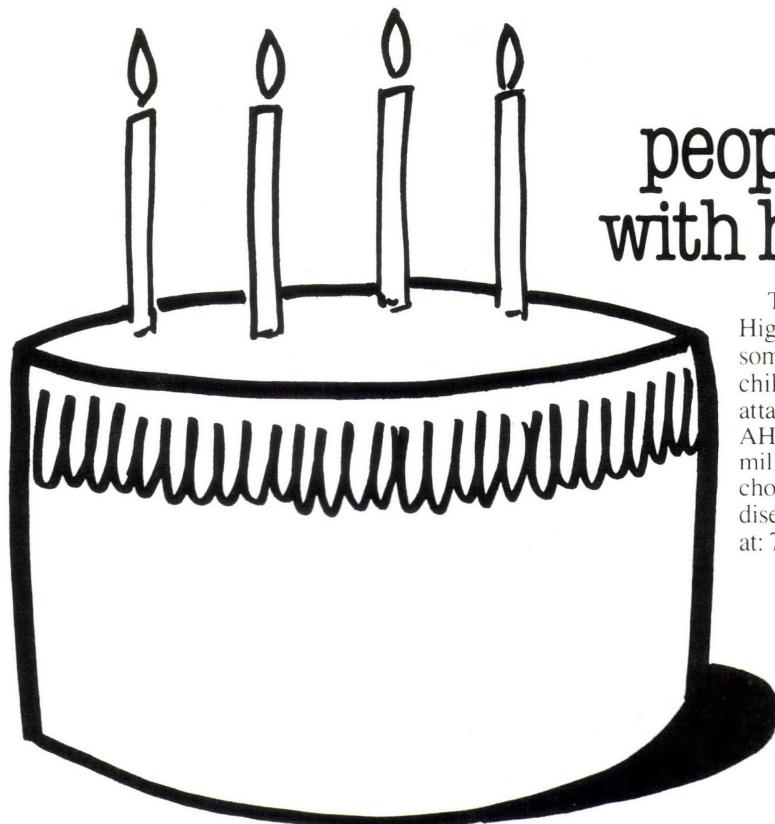
Sound comes through a small speaker just south of the joypad (or through headphones, if you choose to plug in a set). Contrast and volume controls are found at the top-left and on the upper-right side of the unit. Across the top there is the necessary on/off switch, a plug for an AC adapter (not included with the one Sega provided me with), a headphone

jack and a port labeled EXT for use with a cord that allows Game Gears to be linked together, for what Sega calls "Gear to Gear" games (only two at a time so far as I know).

The Game Gear runs on six AA batteries, and its battery life is estimated at roughly three to five hours (much like the Lynx). The batteries are inserted into not one but two battery compartments on the underside of the unit, three batteries per compartment. I don't know if the Game Gear has an

automatic off function (as does the Lynx, which will turn itself off after a period of nonuse). Naturally, for those of you who don't want to spend tens of dollars a week on AAs, an AC adapter can be added to your system. Furthermore, for those of you who like to play "on the go," a rechargeable battery pack will also be offered as an add-on. To top the entire package off,

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the Game Gear can also accommodate an add-on tuner cartridge, which will allow you to use it as a handheld color TV set (much like the TurboExpress).

The unit I received came packaged with *Super Monaco GP*, a high quality Grand Prix racing game. This is one of those pseudo-first-person contests where you see the road from more or less the point of view of the driver, but you can also see your car in the view. The goal of the game is simple: complete each course of the race as quickly as possible, always trying for first place. If you do well enough on one race, you'll be allowed to go on to the next. Place too far back and it's "Game Over."

Helping you along is a map of the current track, which is displayed in the "sky" above your car. A small red dot indicates your position on the track and lets you know when you're coming up on turns. For the first few games I found myself crashing whenever I tried to steal a glance at the map, but it didn't take long until I mastered the useful technique of being able to check the map with my peripheral vision while keeping my attention on the winding roadway.

When you start a race, you're all alone (not in a pack as in *Pole Position*). A number on the screen indicates your current rank in the pack of cars swarming around the track. Every time you pass another car, your ranking goes up one. Conversely, every time you're passed, your rank falls. If you hit something, like a sign or another car, your vehicle tends to spin out of control, then resume the race. This is a nice change from games like *Pole Position*, where the most innocent tire bump resulted in your car going up in flames.

The game is handsome to look at, although the graphics are somewhat spare. There are numerous "backgrounds" for the tracks, as well as variations in color on the landscape. The cars are nicely detailed, as are the little tight-turn warning signs that appear on the side of the track (and which I tend to run into all too often). The sound is fairly good. I'd say it's great except that though the music is really well-done, the sound effects are only so-so. (It's hard to judge a sys-

tem's sound quality based upon a few simple tunes and tire squeals, so I'll reserve judgement on the Game Gear's audio ability for a later date.)

The real fun of the game is in the variety it offers. First, there are some 16 different tracks in an equal number of countries. Each track has its own pitfalls and perils. Some feature lots of snaking curves; others have long straightaways followed by incredibly tight hairpin curves. If that weren't challenge enough, you can customize



Expected to retail for about \$149.95, the Game Gear has a screen resolution of 160 x 146 pixels and can display 32 colors at a time out of a palette of 4,096.

your car before each game. You can select the car's "wing" type, choose between soft and hard tires, take your pick of four different engines and also choose between automatic and manual transmissions. Each combination has different effects on your car, which results in adding some much-needed variety to a game genre that often gets boring and repetitive fast. Sega could do a lot worse than to package this game with the Game Gear, although I'm not sure it's the ideal choice to package the system with, because a lot of gamers don't get into racing titles.

So far as I've had a chance to play with it, the Game Gear looks like a

powerful little system. I look forward to spending many hours playing with it. The retail price for the Game Gear is expected to be \$149.95.

## The Competition

Even as Sega gets ready to launch its entry into the portable gaming sweepstakes, the competition isn't resting on its laurels. Atari Corp. has produced a new version of the Lynx system, called the Lynx II—although no "II" appears on the unit I saw. Atari's plan is to go head-to-head with Nintendo's Game Boy, selling this new Lynx for \$99.95, fully \$80 cheaper than the list price of the current Lynx and \$50 cheaper than the nearest color competition (the aforementioned Game Gear). Atari cut costs by retooling the Lynx. Gone are the bundled power adapter and ComLynx cable (both are now separate options, as with the Game Boy), the hinged-door card slot and the heavy aluminum case. The unit has been redesigned and compressed to make it less expensive to manufacture and a better bargain. The screen remains the same size and all the controls are there (including the screen-flip option for lefties). Internally, it's the same machine, but now it's cheap enough to be competitive.

I have a Lynx II here right now, and there's not much else to say but that it's a Lynx in a less expensive box. The one "new" feature Atari added is a button that allows you to turn the backlight for the screen off and on. In this way you can conserve battery power by turning the lighting off when the game is paused. To let you know the system is on, a power light was added.

I have to add that the Lynx II is, in my opinion, the coolest-looking handheld on the market. VIDEOGAMES & COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT Editor Andy Eddy says it looks like an old Lynx that was squashed, since the new unit is fatter but not as wide as its predecessor. Still, the styling of the unit is really nice. There's also a set of clips on the back of the unit that look like they're designed to allow hookup of a carrying strap.

Well, unfortunately that's all the space there is for this issue. Next time we'll put aside the new hardware and get back to some game reviews. But, for now, I'm ready for another lap of *Monaco GP*. Gotta go! So many games, so little time! ■



# COMPUTER STRATEGIES!

## Learning the Way of the Stones With Ishido

ACCOLADE

**Versions:** Amiga, IBM PC, Macintosh,

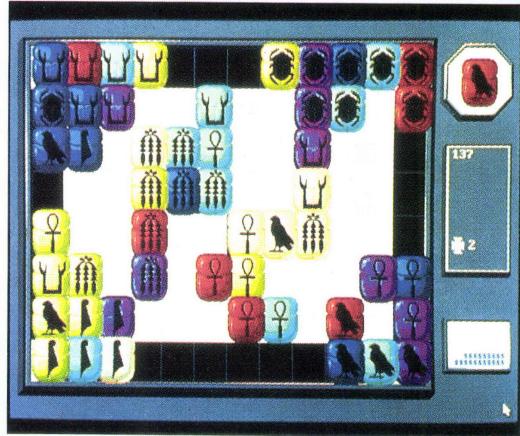
In *Ishido*, gamers must place a set of 72 stones on an 8 x 12 board consisting of 96 spaces. Each stone set uses six colors and six symbols. Stones are presented individually for players to win points by placing them in a precise way on the game board.

The key to mastering *Ishido* is to learn the strategy of the four-way match. This is the single best way to earn big points and empty the stone pouch. To start, notice the six pieces that are pre-placed in the beginning of the game. These are the points from which the four-ways should be made.

Start by placing a piece of equal color on one side of a particular piece. Next, place a piece that is a symbol match on the other side. Continue to match symbols on one side and colors on the other until you form a square consisting of seven pieces. Then you're ready to make a four-way match. There is only one stone that will fit; the piece that matches the symbol on two sides and the color on the other two sides.

While doing all this square-building

*Accolade's Ishido* might not have the kinetic fury of a blastathon, but it's guaranteed to keep brain gamers on the edge of their seats.



work, keep a careful eye out lest the single piece needed to complete the four-way doesn't appear before the square is completed. If this happens and you inadvertently place it somewhere else, you'll waste a lot of time for nothing. There's not much left to do in that case except place a stone in the center and get at least a two- or three-way out of it. Then quickly move on to another four-way.

This strategy must be three-dimensional in order to work effectively. In other words, work on several four-ways at once, one off each corner piece, and at least two in the middle. This way, even if a few of them get botched, there's still plenty of points to score. There's another advantage to this strategy: The pieces are spread out, leaving plenty of space to

stick extra pieces as you near the end and must clear the few remaining stones from the pouch.

The last part of the strategy is anticipation, and this only comes with practice. Work on building two-, three- or four-ways based on the pieces that have not yet been played. Try to anticipate the next couple of stones so you can cash in when they appear.

Finally, get everything you can out of a screen. In other words, watch and realize when there is simply no more room to make a four-way. Then look for areas to build a three- or even a two-way. These moves may not bring one the glory of the four-way, but they are essential to high-scoring as well as getting rid of the last few stones efficiently.

—Frank Tetro, Jr.

## Staying Alive as the Night Hunter

UBI SOFT

Versions: Amiga, Atari ST, IBM PC

In *Night Hunter*, gamers become a creature of the night. The mission: Suck your way through town collecting the eight items necessary to advance to the next level. While traveling, the Count can transform into a bat or a werewolf to help him succeed. However, Professor Von Helsing has other plans. He has hired archers, axemen, priests and other assorted do-gooders to hunt down and destroy Dracula once and for all.

As the game begins, walk either left or right and continue along the path checking each door as you go. Certain doors will be locked, so make a mental note to return to these once Dracula acquires the keys. Doors bearing a crucifix cannot ever be opened, so just ignore them.

As the Count walks along, stop at the beginning of each screen, and look closely for objects and traps. Oftentimes traps are hidden in the landscape and appear as small black holes in the ground. Falling in these traps on ground level results in

instant death. Likewise, objects like keys and vials may be camouflaged against the background.

If Dracula comes upon a river or lake, change into a bat and fly over the water. Make sure the Count has plenty of energy and flies completely over the water before changing back; landing in water spells instant death. Although Dracula can also turn into a werewolf, there seems to be no obvious benefit to doing so.

Next come the do-gooders. Some creatures, like the witch and the ravens, cannot be destroyed and should be avoided. Do so by ducking down until they fly past completely. The men with no weapons and the axemen do a fair amount of damage but are not as lethal as the archers, the police and the priests, who may hit the Count from a distance. When approaching these guys, press the button when Dracula is no more than half an inch

from them. Hold down the button until they change to bones, so you can get the most blood for the bite.

When you deal with an adversary that

fires from long distances, duck until the character that is firing is next to Dracula. Then spring up and let him have it. Should you choose to go around as a werewolf, avoid the policemen: their silver bullets kill the werewolf instantly.

The vampire hunters are armed with wooden stakes and can kill Dracula with one blow.

It's best to avoid these guys unless you are desperate for blood. Lastly, the Professor is invincible and armed with flying stakes. Avoid him at all costs!

Finally, keep an eye on the position of the moon in the sky. Once the moon nears the right side of the screen, daybreak is coming, and Dracula must return to the crypt quickly or be fried where he stands!

—F. T., Jr.

As Count Dracula, the player must defeat the forces of Professor Von Helsing in Ubi Soft's *Night Hunter*.



continued from page 50

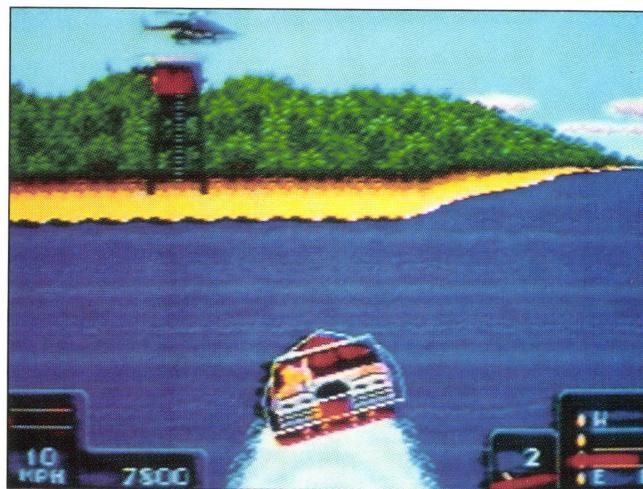
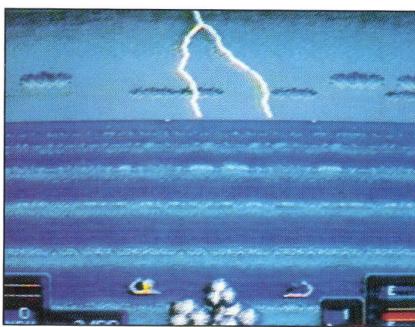
behind the operation, and all the other villains guest star as the various bosses of each level. As Tracy, you're equipped with a killer pair of fists, a pistol and a machine gun. You walk or ride shotgun through each level, jumping over the obstacles as the streets, warehouses, railyards and other Chicago scenery scrolls by. Your mission: kill everything that moves (there are no innocent bystanders). If your foe is ahead of you or behind you, use your pistol; if they're across the street, your machine gun is the weapon of choice. Run out of ammo and you simply punch them to death. Simple.

Oh, there are a few little twists, like extra points if you avoid breaking windows (a very difficult task). In fact, one of the coolest things about the game is your ability to do some serious rearrangement of the scenery with your machine gun: shattering whole building facades, reducing phone booths to rubble, turning hardtops into convertibles and more. Between levels there are bonus rounds that give you practice distinguishing friends from enemies, but since there are no friends in the rest of the game, file that information away in your Crimestopper's Textbook. You also have to learn how to jump and duck to dodge enemy fire, knives, falling beams and so on.

The bosses are definitely persistent. They run back and forth across the street. You shoot one with a machine gun, he plays dead for a few seconds, gets up and runs around some more. Eventually, you wear his life line down and he dies. But wait—there's a brief cartoon panel showing you packing him off to the Big House. Apparently your 25 bursts of machine-gun fire just injured him a little!

The graphics are colorful, simplistic and at times repetitive (Level 1, Area A looks exactly like Level 3, Area A, and so on). The nonanimated cartoon panels are primitive. Tracy's animation is also stiff and without style, but the car sequences are nicely done, with large, smoothly ani-

**Nuvision's Bimini Run is one of the few uniquely original Genesis titles around.**



mated cars and nary a flicker anywhere. The music is average, but the sounds of gunfire, breaking glass, explosions and so on are solid and realistic.

Though the game has some interesting sequences and a few challenging areas, it's unimaginative, uninventive and not up to the standards of the better Genesis titles. Give it an "R" for rental.

—J. M.

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## Bimini Run

NUVISION

For the Sega Genesis (\$49.95)

SOUND/MUSIC	1	2	3	4	5	<b>6</b>	7	8	9	10
GRAPHICS	1	2	3	4	5	<b>6</b>	7	8	9	10
PLAYABILITY	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	<b>9</b>	10
OVERALL	1	2	3	4	5	6	<b>7</b>	8	9	10

Events quickly turn sour on your pleasant vacation in the Bimini Islands. Your sister, Kim, gets kidnapped. The men responsible force her aboard their powerboat and speed out of the marina. Of course, there's only one thing to do: Take off after them with a speedboat of your own. Luckily, you happen to borrow one from the dock that's armed with cannons, anti-aircraft guns and a bazooka—your typical video-world leisure craft. Your best buddy, Luka, tags along with you for good measure.

As you race for the kidnappers' boat, a voice crackles over the radio "Kenji [that's your name], come in!" The informant suggests that to make your job of catching the kidnappers' boat easier, you should fire upon it with your bazooka. Gee, thanks! Oh, and be sure not to ram

into the private yachts crowding the waters, or you'll crash and lose a boat. The kidnappers, however, get to mercilessly ram through all the expensive boats at will. Such is the justice of life in a video game.

Upon catching the kidnappers, you discover that Kim is not aboard! It

turns out that the boat you followed was a decoy. Your sister was actually taken by the sinister Dr. Orca. He plans to test his new B.A.M. translator (that's short for behavior-altering module) on her.

You and Luka are soon off to another part of the Bimini waters, where you must blow away island radio towers (as instructed by the voice on the radio). Destroying them will narrow your search down as to which island Orca and Kim are on. As you do this, Orca's fleet of heavily armed gunboats and squadron of combat helicopters attack. Blow them up with your abundant artillery, or they'll easily do the same to you first.

Later in the game, you have to tail Orca's yacht to yet another one of his hideouts. Guard towers situated on islands and lots of other things must be blown up before you can save your sister. Yet it's not over once you've recovered Kim. After all, you might as well go for Orca's B.A.M. translator while you're at it, which you eagerly do.

Only by following the mermaid Marlyna, avoiding clouds of toxic fumes and annihilating sharks, sea dragons and other monsters will you arrive at the hidden island where the B.A.M. translator is. A couple of well-placed shots with your bazooka and...Ka-Blooey! Orca's greatest threat turns into a pile of scrap metal. Hey, feeling as invulnerable as you are by now, why not go for Orca's incredibly ugly looking headquarters as well? Sure! Vacations have never been such a blast—literally.

Minor navigational abilities are needed to race from one island to another—a welcome challenge that provides some flexibility in game play. You can navigate by looking at maps and reading a directional compass. Natural obstacles to avoid, indicated on the maps, include rocks, sand reefs and fog. There's a switch to turn off the music playing on the radio. Do it. It's tuned to a station that plays nothing but a repetitious beat.

Two people can play at once—one controlling the powerboat, the other aiming and firing the guns. Few video games implement cooperative play. It's nice to see one that not only does so but is able to with success.

Considering overall playability, this is one of the few uniquely original Genesis games around. What faults there are, though, are glaring. Graphics and animation are below the higher standards you would expect. Also disappointing is the staid ending that's shown upon your final victory over Dr. Orca. Nothing is more aggravating than seeing only a single

screen and reading text hinting at the possibility of a sequel.

After battling against gunboats, choppers, sea monsters and such, you'd think the reward would be greater. Alas, it is not. Otherwise, this gaming experience is a true gem. It's unfortunate that there's nothing as impressive as the on-screen explosions to top it all off.

—Howard H. Wen

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# Play Beetlejuice, Beetlejuice, Beetlejuice

on your NES<sup>®</sup>, NES<sup>®</sup>, NES<sup>®</sup>.



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for play on the  
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ENTERTAINMENT  
SYSTEM



It's show time—  
courtesy of  
Me—the "Ghost  
with the most!"



How'd you  
like to help  
me scare  
those city  
folks out of your house  
and *their* wits?

We'll soar through 8  
horrific levels (you're  
gonna love the  
Afterlife Waiting  
Room) taking on  
Killer Giant Beetles, Legs  
Without  
Heads



and other  
gruesome  
creatures. One wrong  
step... and you're food for  
the Sand Worm.

Here's a tip: Buy scares  
from the Recently  
Deceased Information  
Booth, they're your best  
weapons. So, join  
me in the Neither-  
world... and make



my  
millennium!



# PAC-MAN'S BACK AND GAME BOY'S GOT HIM!



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The arcade classic Pac-Man makes his Game Boy™ debut in this sensational new release from Namco. Relive the adventure as you munch your way through twisting mazes filled with power pellets, bonus fruit, and those wicked ghosts! Beware of their touch- they've been known to snack on Pac's.

Hook up with a friend to double the excitement in this first 2-player Pac-Man™. Determine the challenge by choosing the number of lives you'll need to defeat your opponent. Add fuel to the rivalry by using the handicap feature which allows two players to begin in different rounds. Gulp down a ghost and shoot'em to your opponent's maze!



**There's Ghosts to gobble so get Pac'n.**

**namco**<sup>®</sup>

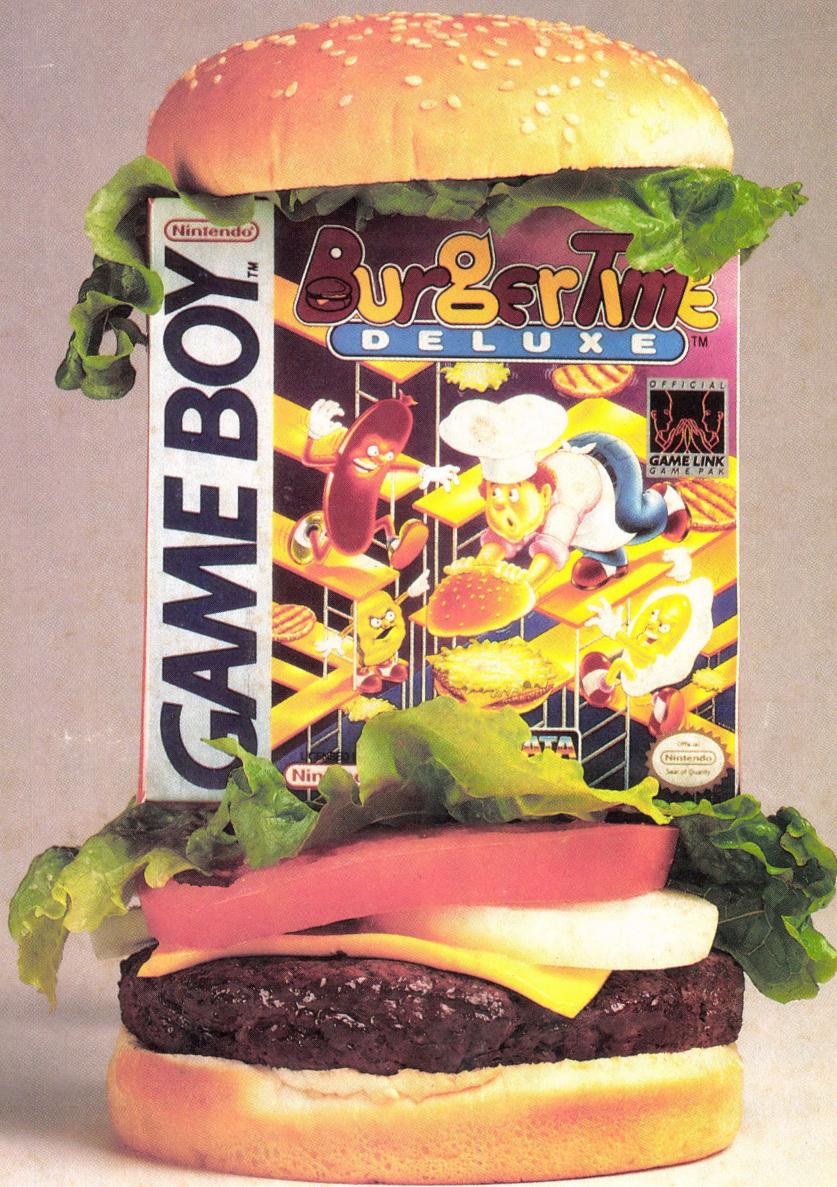
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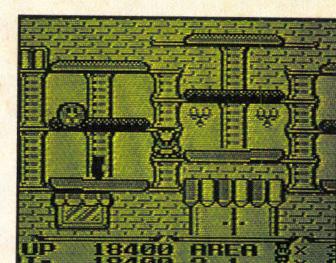
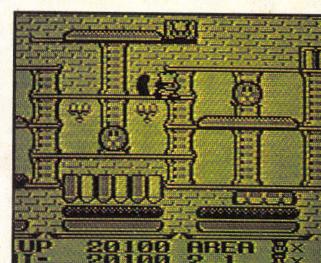
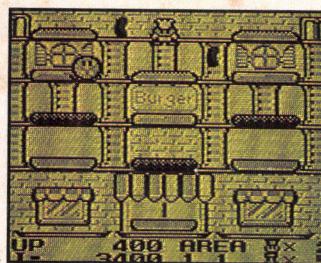
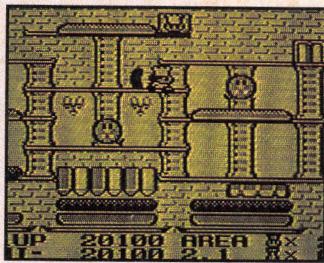
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# GIMME' THE WORKS!



Today's Special: **Flame-broiled burgers piled high with all the works.** Peter Pepper, the burger chef is stacking these sizzling, mouth watering burgers with all the trimmings. But the grill is smoking from

the annoying food fiends—Mr. Egg, Mr. Wiener and Mr. Pickle—who are trying to slow down production. It's food flingin' fun for you and a friend with **BurgerTime Deluxe**, new from Data East.



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